

# SIDETRACKS OF CITI- ZENSHIP AND A MORAL PANIC

Youth's exclusion in Finnish public  
media debate in 2008–13

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<p>The public debate on youth's exclusion in Finland has increased from early 21<sup>st</sup> century onwards and sparked around 2008, as this thesis shows. It seems to have become one of the most troubling current issues in Finnish politics. This thesis researches, how youth's exclusion is understood in this public debate. It goes on to find out what are the prerequisites for youth's full citizenship in this debate? How is youth's exclusion in the public debate defined as risky? Is there a moral panic and if so, how is it visible?</p> <p>The data made use of consists of over 500 opinion pieces, columns and editorials from a Finnish newspaper Helsingin Sanomat starting from 2008 and ending in 2013. The data is approached with discourse analysis as a methodological tool. Research's theoretical framework consists of analytics of government and the public debate is interpreted as politics of conduct, defining ideal citizenship and moral behaviour. Other theoretical frameworks are citizenship theory and social constructionism.</p> <p>The quantitative analysis shows that the share of opinion pieces dealing with youth's exclusion compared to the debate on exclusion in general has increased since the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, but especially from year 2008. A conclusion is made, that exclusion in the public debate is nowadays considered especially a risk concerning youth. In addition, the debate on youth's exclusion is thematically especially about unemployment and education politics, which leads to the conclusion that youth's exclusion is understood especially as outsidership from wage-labour and education.</p> <p>Altogether eight discourses in the debate are presented. Discourse of permanence sees exclusion as a final state of affairs, where there is no coming back. The gender essentialist discourse understands exclusion especially as a boys' problem. Certain ways of behaving are linked to essentialist conceptions of genders and defined as either superior or inferior. Two discourses of active citizenship are represented. The first one attaches full membership to active citizenship, which again is primarily connected to wage-labour and defending social dependency. Secondly, active citizenship is defined as political participation and having one's voice heard. These five represent the prerequisites for youth's full citizenship and the appropriate, moral behaviour.</p> <p>According to the neoliberal discourse, youth's exclusion is primarily an issue concerning Finnish international economic competitiveness. The communitarian discourse deals with positioning responsibility and demanding absolute morality and strong family values. According to it responsibility is shifted on the shoulders of families, communities and the young themselves. The discourse of defending Finnish nation state gives meaning to exclusion as a threat to both the nation state and the welfare state. These three describe the risky nature of youth's exclusion and therefore the moral panic present in the public debate.</p> <p>This research goes on to the realization that exclusion is very much synonymous to unemployment and therefore wage-labour receives the monopoly of inclusion. Exclusion, the way it is defined in the public debate, is highly paradoxical. Exclusion easily becomes an individual question, instead of structural. Wandering youth represent a threat to the homogeneity of the society. The debate defines how a normative life-course for an individual should be like and leaves almost no room for individual variations. Instead of a relational understanding of exclusion, it becomes a quantifiable and natural conception.</p> <p>A moral panic can indeed be said to exist in the public debate on youth's exclusion. Therefore youth's exclusion becomes more a symbol of the threat to some traditional values and an established order. According to the public debate these traditional values include hard work and the will to take responsibility for the nation state's economic competitiveness. Furthermore a moral panic includes the need to take firm steps in order to prevent the downward spiral caused by the concerning phenomenon. When it comes to youth's exclusion, the firm steps are simplified to the simplest possible solutions. Responsibility is demanded from the whole nation state and setting up a bee to combat exclusion is frequently suggested.</p>			
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<p>Suomessa julkinen keskustelu nuorten syrjäytymisestä on lisääntynyt 2000-luvun alusta lähtien ja syttynyt toden teolla vuoden 2008 tienoilla, kuten tämä tutkimus osoittaa. Siitä näyttää tulleen yksi kaikkein huolestuttavimmista aiheista suomalaisessa politiikassa ja julkisessa keskustelussa. Tässä työssä tutkitaan, kuinka nuorten syrjäytyminen määritellään ja ymmärretään julkisessa keskustelussa. Edelleen, työ selvittää, mitkä ovat edellytykset nuoren täysivaltaiselle kansalaiselle tämän julkisen keskustelun mukaan. Miten julkinen keskustelu määrittelee nuorten syrjäytymisen riskinä tai vaarana – onko keskustelussa havaittavissa moraalinen paniikki ja jos on, miten se ilmenee?</p> <p>Tutkielman aineisto koostuu yli 500 mielipidekirjoituksesta, kolumnista ja pääkirjoituksesta, jotka on kerätty suomalaisesta sanomalehdestä Helsingin Sanomat vuosilta 2008–13. Aineistoa lähestytään hyödyntäen diskurssianalyysia metodologisena työkaluna. Työn teoreettinen viitekehys koostuu hallinnan analytiikasta ja julkista keskustelua tulkitaan hallinnallisuuden (politics of conduct) muotona, joka määrittelee ideaalia kansalaisuutta sekä moraalisesti oikeaa käytöstä. Tutkielman muut teoreettiset viitekehukset ovat kansalaisuusteoria ja sosiaalikonstruktioismi.</p> <p>Kvantitatiivisen analyysin kautta huomataan, että syrjäytymistä koskevassa keskustelussa nuorten syrjäytymistä käsittelevien mielipidekirjoitusten osuus on kasvanut läpi 2000-luvun, mutta erityisesti vuodesta 2008 lähtien. Näin tullaan johtopäätökseen, että syrjäytyminen nähdään julkisessa keskustelussa tänä päivänä erityisesti nuoria koskevana riskinä. Tutkielmassa huomataan myös, että nuorten syrjäytymistä koskeva julkinen keskustelu liittyy temaattisesti nimenomaan koulutuspolitiikkaan ja työhön. Näin ollen todetaan, että julkinen keskustelu ymmärtää syrjäytymisen erityisesti ulkopuolisuutena työelämästä ja koulutuksesta.</p> <p>Tutkielma esittelee yhteensä kahdeksan nuorten syrjäytymistä koskevan julkisen keskustelun diskurssia. Lopullisuuden diskurssi ymmärtää syrjäytymisen lopullisena, pysyvänä olotilana, josta ei ole paluuta. Sukupuoliessentialistinen diskurssi näkee syrjäytymisen erityisesti poikia koskevana ongelmana. Tietyt käyttäytymismallit liitetään sen piirissä essentialistisiin käsityksiin kahdesta dikotomisen opposition muodostavasta sukupuolesta. Nämä käyttäytymismallit määritellään diskurssissa joko huonompina tai parempina. Kaksi aktiivisen kansalaisuuden diskurssia paikannetaan. Näistä ensimmäinen liittää täysivaltaisen kansalaisuuden palkkatyöhön ja vastustaa sosiaalista riippuvuutta. Toinen diskurssi ymmärtää aktiivisen kansalaisuuden poliittisena osallisuutena ja mahdollisuutena saada äänensä kuuluviin. Nämä viisi diskurssia määrittelevät julkisessa keskustelussa nuoren täysivaltaisen kansalaisuuden ehtoja ja sopivaa, moraalista käyttäytymistä.</p> <p>Uusliberalistisessa diskurssissa nuorten syrjäytyminen näyttäytyy haasteena Suomen taloudelliselle kilpailukyvyllle kansainvälisillä markkinoilla. Kommunitaristinen diskurssi etsii vastuun paikkoja ja vaatii ehdotonta moraalisuutta sekä vahvoja perhearvoja. Se siirtää vastuuta nuorten syrjäytymisestä perheiden, yhteisöjen ja nuorten itsensä harteille. Suomen kansallisvaltiota puolustava diskurssi näkee nuorten syrjäytymisen uhkana sekä kansallisvaltiolle että hyvinvointivaltiolle. Nämä kolme diskurssia liittyvät nuorten syrjäytymisen ymmärtämiseen riskinä ja siten julkisessa keskustelussa ilmenevään moraaliseen paniikkiin.</p> <p>Tutkielma päättyy johtopäätökseen, että julkisessa keskustelussa nuorten syrjäytyminen on paljolti synonyymi nuorten työttömyydelle, jolloin palkkatyö saavuttaa inklusion monopolin. Syrjäytyminen julkisessa keskustelussa on voimakkaan paradoksaalinen. Vaeltava ja paikkaansa etsivä nuorisoon näyttää uhkana yhteiskunnan homogeenisyydelle. Julkinen keskustelu määrittelee, millainen on normaali elämäntapa, eikä henkilökohtaiselle vaihtelulle jää juuri tilaa. Syrjäytymisestä tulee relationaalisuuden sijaan luonnollinen ja kvantifioitavissa oleva ilmiö.</p> <p>Julkisessa keskustelussa näyttää tutkimuksen perusteella syntyneen moraalinen paniikki. Tällöin nuorten syrjäytymisestä tulee ennen kaikkea uhka perinteisille arvoille ja vallitsevalle sosiaaliselle järjestykselle. Julkisessa keskustelussa nämä perinteiset arvot sisältävät ainakin ahkeran työnteon ja halun kantaa vastuunsa kansallisvaltion taloudellisen kilpailukyvyn eteen. Moraaliseen paniikkiin kuuluu myös tarve ottaa määrätietoista askeleita syöksykierteen estämiseksi. Nuorten syrjäytymistä koskevassa keskustelussa nämä askeleet ovat äärimmilleen yksinkertaistettuja ratkaisuja. Vastuun kantamista vaaditaan koko kansallisvaltiolta ja talkoiden pystyttämistä syrjäytymisen pysäyttämiseksi ehdotetaan säännöllisesti.</p>		
Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords		
syrjäytyminen nuoret kansalaisuus hallinta diskurssianalyysi julkinen keskustelu		

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Exclusion of youth has been largely debated in the public media over the past years in Finland. The amount of excluded youth has varied from up to 9 % of all young people during the recession years in the beginning of the 1990s, to the 5 % of today (Myrskylä 2012, 1). Where has the accelerating public debate gotten its spark from? What is the debate about? The public media can be seen as an instance that makes a phenomenon visible (Jallinoja 2006, 10). In addition it can have a major effect on how a phenomenon is understood and what kind of a stance people should take toward it. In my thesis I am interested in these constructions of youth's exclusion in a national newspaper in Finland during years 2008–2013.

Three major efforts have been made in the past couple of years in order to solve the exclusion of youth, which is seen as maybe one of the most troubling current issues in Finnish public debate. Firstly, the income support law (*laki toimeentulotuesta* 1412/1997) was tautened in 2011. On the basis of this tautened law it is possible to cut down the income support up to 40 % of people under 25 years if they reject an offered place in education or work.

Secondly, Sauli Niinistö, the then newly elected president of the republic of Finland, set up a committee to solve the exclusion of youth. In fall 2012 the committee published a leaflet and a website “*Ihan tavallisia asioita*” (free translation “Ordinary things”). The campaign's aim was to offer everyday ways for adults to

tackle with youth in order to be able to effect exclusion beforehand.

Thirdly, in the beginning of 2013 a youth guarantee was set up. It obliges the society to offer every citizen under 25 years and every newly graduated under 30 a place in education, work, training or rehabilitation within three months from the beginning of unemployment. The goals of the guarantee are said to be to decrease exclusion and to increase employment of youth. (The Ministry of Employment and Economy 2012, 7-8.)

As Tuula Helne (2002, 8-9), I understand the public debate on exclusion to tell at least as much about society as about exclusion itself. I in fact claim that the debate tells much more about society than about exclusion itself. Exclusion as a phenomenon is interesting because it really cannot be understood separate from an understanding of society. Innerness and outsiderhood are in-built in any speech on exclusion. Exclusion is therefore a very relational concept and cannot be understood separate from the social context, where it is constructed (*ibid.*, 26). Therefore media offers a valid object for research of exclusion since it is a major space of the phenomenon's construction.

I am researching, how the exclusion of youth is understood in the public debate in Finland. Where is youth understood to become excluded from? Is it the society, the welfare state, the social community, experienced welfare or something else (Suurpää 2009, 4-8)? How much is exclusion synonymous to unemployment? What are the excluded young understood to be like? What kinds of power structures and subject positions are present in Finnish debate on youth's exclusion? T.H. Marshall (1950) has defined citizenship as "a status bestowed on those who are full

members of a community” – I’m therefore interested in, what the prerequisites for youth’s full membership of the community are, according to the public debate. Before even having started my research project, I had pointed out, that youth’s exclusion might be defined as dangerous and risky in the public debate. In what sense and why is it risky?

My primary research questions are:

- 1) How are exclusion and the excluded youth defined in the public media debate?
- 2) What are the prerequisites for youth’s full citizenship according to the public debate?
- 3) How is youth’s exclusion constructed as risky? Is there a moral panic and how is it visible?

My data consists of over 500 opinion pieces, editorials and columns from the biggest national newspaper in Finland, Helsingin Sanomat, from 2008 to 2013. In order to solve my research questions I am using discourse analysis as a methodological tool. My theoretical framework consists of citizenship theory, social constructionism and analytics of government.

First I am presenting general discussion on exclusion and some quantifications of youth’s exclusion in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Finland. Next I am turning to my theoretical framework and the important concepts for my thesis. In chapter two I will represent the methodological choices I’ve made and my data. In chapter three I am analyzing the possibility of a moral panic and finding out, how exclusion of youth is understood in the public debate by analyzing where youth is understood to become excluded from. In chapters four and five I am heading for the discourse analysis

and introducing the eight discourses that I have pointed out during my research process. The first four are about defining prerequisites for youth's full membership in the community. The last three represent the moral panic and its qualities. In the last chapter I am theorizing the monopoly of inclusion wage-labour has received and presenting some concluding ideas.

## **1.1 Youth – a risky phase of life?**

Childhood has been described as “the most intensively governed sector of personal existence” (Rose 1999, orig. 1989; 122). I understand youth as an object of governance and risk politics. Risk politics includes risk speech, calculation of risks and the awareness of prevailing risks (Harrikari 2008, 32). The extension of social citizenship to the children of the Western world happened as late as around the 1940s. At that time children received access to social services and the educational system. But citizenship imposed duties as well as rights. Children came to represent a potential threat to the welfare state either now or in the future. (Rose 1999, orig. 1989; 122-125.)

Different phases of life are objects to varying expectations defined by institutions such as the education system, the labour market and social communities. These expectations set a frame on what is a desirable and socially acceptable life-course. (Kojo 2012.) Furthermore the conceptions of a proper or desirable life-course are morally built up (Pohjola 1994, 173). During the past decades youth as a phase of life has been object to various changes. Youth lasts longer than before – in the Western world up until thirty years of age. People are affected by the growing



demands of the labour market and the evermore uncertain future ahead of them. So they graduate, create a steady career and start a family later on in life. (Wrede-Jäntti 2010, 30.) Nowadays life can no longer be said to be predetermined by a certain standard model, *the cultural model of growing up* (Kojo 2010).

Youth as a phase of life is a period of transitions, which can in itself be defined as a marginal position between childhood and adulthood. The integration to the society is therefore somewhat in the process of making for every young person. (Järvinen & Jahnukainen 2001, 141.) Before youth was a largely predetermined phase of unconscious transitions, which did not come out as a particularly stressful stage of life for the young. Nowadays this phase of life is labelled by individualized decision-making resulting in less certainty, more risk and a variety of possible choices for the young. (Vickerstaff 2006, 183-184.) The possible choices available for today's individuals are multiple – this has even been called “the labyrinth of life” (Pais 2003). In the face of these multiple choices, responsibility for making the right decisions has grown. Therefore both success and failure are seen to be arising from individual efforts. (Vickerstaff 2006, 184.) The changes in youth as a phase of life may have had an influence on the accelerating debate on exclusion. Youth may be seen as a capricious group unwilling or unable to settle for the traditional life cycle.

Manuela du Bois-Reymond (1998) has separated two types of transitions to adulthood. The first one is a linear transition, common to especially girls with working-class backgrounds. This type of transition involves a straight-forward life course from short education to work and family life. The other one is a non-

linear transition, which can encompass synchronical and reversible status passages. This is typical of well-of young people, both boys and girls, who have the privilege of being able to reflect on one's life decisions and for example travel before settling in. This type of transition is also typical of excluded youth with low income, temporary jobs and so the transitional stage of life may also be contrary to one's own will. Du Bois-Reymond has however decided to call the first transition *normal biography* and the other one *choice biography*, therefore losing a lot of the quality and plurality of the possible ways of transitioning. This is however an interesting categorization making visible some of the various paths, which may be formed and maintained either by choice or by obligation.

From the 1980s onwards a moral turn can be located. Children have more and more come to represent consumers and work force of the future (Satka 2009, 27). Investments in children are investments in the future by the whole society (Lister 2003). The governance of youth can be attached to the multiple shifts in welfare politics. These include the shift towards individual responsibility instead of public responsibility, control culture emphasizing early interventions, the post-expansive welfare state and the rapid rise of neoliberalism and economism. In the spirit of new public management for instance, the resources must be directed effectively. Therefore it is best to direct them at the riskiest individuals, which is how the political shifts have also influenced the rise of risk politics. (Harrikari 2008.) This has increased concern of youth and demands for early interventions (Satka 2009). The 21<sup>st</sup> century can be described with the term "postmodern risk culture with a constant moral panic" (Harrikari 2008). From an early phase of my research project, it became

clear to me that the debate on exclusion of youth might very well be some sort of a *moral panic*.

## 1.2 Youth's exclusion in the 21st century Finland

During my research process I have come to a conclusion that there is nothing certain about defining or calculating exclusion of youth. We are immediately faced with questions such as who are young and how exclusion is defined.

According to the Youth Law (nuorisolaki 72/2006) all people under 29 years are defined as young (Youth Law 2.1 § 1 k.) However according to the Youth Guarantee only people under 25 years and newly graduated under 30 are defined as young and have the right (or obligation) to the guarantee (The Ministry of Employment and Education 2012). The sweet 25 appears to be a magical border, after which the young's education or employment aren't as endorsed as they were a day before the birthday. Whilst at the same time the cultural youth as a life-period has become longer, up until thirty years of age (see 1.1). This can be attached to the idea of deserving and undeserving poor. People under 25 are still understood as deserving, whereas people over it as undeserving. It is not meaningless, where the institutional age limit is set up. One of the interviewees in social work researcher Anneli Pohjola's (1994, 209-111) doctoral thesis describes the institutional age limit's meaning as follows:

When I turned twenty-five, until then everything went fine, when I always got those places for half years, when I was under twenty-five. But when I turned over-aged, well after that it ended. That when you're so old, you don't get them anymore. (translation IH)

Youth has been seen as a group of citizens causing collective concern for more than a few years now. During the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the public has been concerned about at least the increasing violent behavior of girls, the growing number of families as service users in child welfare services. In addition there are more children that have been taken into custody and child poverty and economic inequality have increased in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Finland. (Hämäläinen & Kangas 2010.)

The exclusion of youth seems to be smoothly escaping efforts to create statistics on it and to make the phenomenon quantitative – I think this has a lot to do with the concept's relational nature. Still there can be distinguished a persistent effort to explain the phenomenon, to name statistically meaningful risk factors behind it and to find out what the best indicators of a child's future exclusion are. Almost every time I have told someone I am writing my thesis on exclusion, people ask me what I think is the reason behind exclusion. I think that this interesting pattern and the need to declare grounds tell about people's need to comprehend a threatening phenomenon and to make it as much understandable, predictable and explainable as possible – to understand the risk in order to be able to combat the risk. In my thesis I am however not interested in the reason behind exclusion, which I think is a very multiple, potentially life-long process of various inclusions, exclusions and diversions. Instead I think that the various ways to give meaning to exclusion in the public debate can be and are in fact one of the reasons behind exclusion.

One significant effort to quantify the exclusion of youth was Pekka Myrskylä's (2012) report for Elinkeinoelämän valtuuskunta EVA. In the introduction Myrskylä (*ibid.*, 2) declares that in order to interfere in exclusion, we need to find out who

the excluded youth are and clarify the whole concept of exclusion. In addition, according to him, we must specify the at-risk groups of young people. This is how he rejects the possibility of the constructional nature of exclusion and is aiming at essentializing and stabilizing the concept. He is therefore trying to turn a multidimensional concept into a one-dimensional, quantifiable, simplified one. It can however be said, that he has somewhat failed. He defines exclusion as “being outside education and employment and not having a degree after elementary school” (ibid., 2). This definition has been reasonably criticized for its narrowness (Järvinen & Vanttaja 2013, 509). However, the publication of the report triggered an active public debate and so it cannot be completely ignored.

Statistically the worry of the exclusion of youth is especially directed at three groups: 1) ninth-graders not entering any further education, 2) people under 25 years registered as unemployed job applicants in the Employment Services and 3) NEET-youth.

The first concerning group are children finishing the ninth grade in elementary school that don't apply or don't get into any further education. Every year there are 4000-5000 of these children and altogether 15 % of each age group are left without a degree after many abandon their studies, even though they have been accepted to some school. There are 110 000 people aged 20–29 without a degree after elementary school. (Myrskylä 2012.) The other concerning group are people under 25 years that are registered as unemployed job applicants in employment services. 4,5 % of all young people in this age group belong to this pack. Furthermore, one third of these young do not have any education after the elementary school, so this group is very much overlapping the previous one. (Statistics Finland 2011.)

The third group consists of the young that aren't working, in school or registered as unemployed job applicants in employment services. In the European Union discourse these young are referred to as NEET (*not in employment, education or training*). Ruth Levitas (2006, 134) has described NEET as participation in economically and socially valuable activities. In the Finnish discourse these young are called "the lost youth" (*kadonneet nuoret*) and as the name indicates, there is very little research or even information on this group (Myrskylä 2012). It has been estimated that there are approximately 32 500 of them in Finland and over 50 % of them does not have education after the elementary school. "No one really knows who they are and what they are doing" (ibid., 1). Furthermore I think that an important question is, if they are considered to be so marginal, that it isn't even possible to get to know them.

What kinds of common indicators can be found behind these statistics? First of all exclusion is a gender issue. In 2010 as much as two thirds of the young categorized as excluded were men. Secondly exclusion is a question of immigration politics, since one third of excluded youth had an immigrant background. Thirdly exclusion runs in the family – approximately half of the parents of excluded youth can themselves be categorized as excluded. Child's parents' socioeconomic background and education have significant impact on the child's risk to become excluded. (Myrskylä 2012, 3-7.) At the same time poverty in families with children has increased in Finland and there are more and more over-generational service-users in child welfare services. It has been pointed out that service usership in child welfare services is statistically connected to the child's further education, which again is one of the main factors behind exclusion.

A special risk group are children that have been taken into custody. One fourth of them belongs to the category NEET. (Heino & Johnson 2010.)

On the grounds of my own work experience in child welfare services<sup>i</sup>. I dare to argue that exclusion might have something to do with the accumulation of various problems. Combinations of for example family background, custody, unfortunate experiences from school, criminality, drugs and not finding one's way to further education after elementary school build up and the young may eventually become *sidetracked*. However this kind of view has been criticized for its determinacy. Once these various combinations have begun to accumulate, exclusion is proceeding in a way determined beforehand. On the other hand this view may reveal different "career paths" to exclusion and especially the factors that have succeeded in stopping the process of exclusion. (Järvinen & Jahnukainen 2001, 133-136.)

### **1.3 Exclusion – indicators and quantifications**

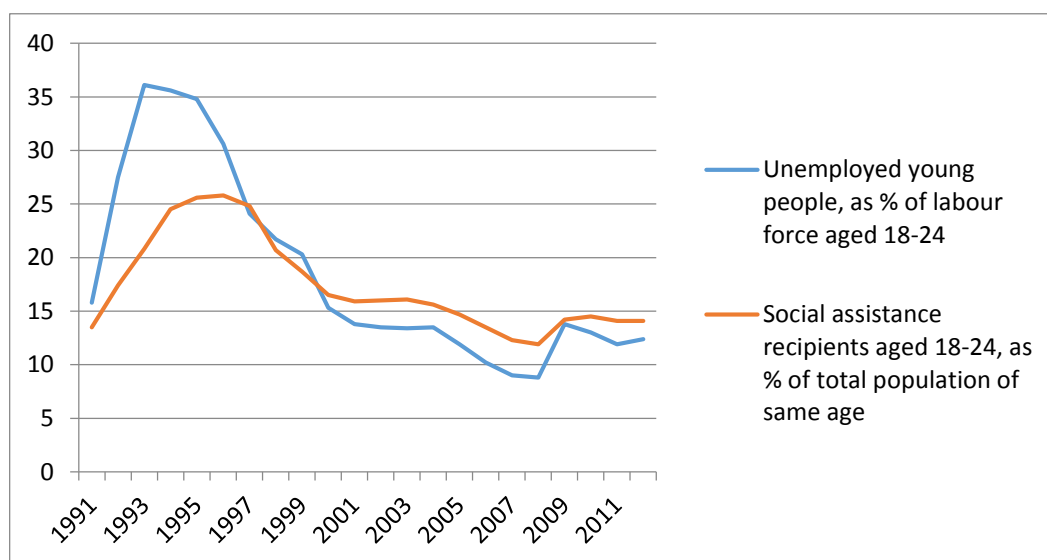
Exclusion is such a multiple concept that there are various indicators designed to make exclusion quantifiable. In the European Union eighteen primary and secondary indicators have been named to fulfill this task (European Commission 2008). Youth's exclusion is a somewhat differing phenomenon from the whole population's exclusion. There are four most common indicators by which youth's exclusion has been calculated in Finland:

- 1) young people on social assistance
- 2) unemployed young people
- 3) young people not in education or training

4) ninth-graders not entering further education.

I argue that there is a vivid public conception that youth's unemployment has risen and is rising. We can see that both the amount of young people on social assistance and the amount of unemployed young aged 18–24 have been at their highest level during the recession years in the beginning of the 1990s. From 1996 onwards the numbers have been sinking, until starting to go up again from 2008 onwards. (Graph 1.) 2008 was the year of the global financial crisis and the beginning of the current recession. It is however noteworthy that at the moment the amount of unemployed youth is in fact lower than in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Graph 1 Unemployed and social assistance recipients aged 18–24 as % of total population of same age.**

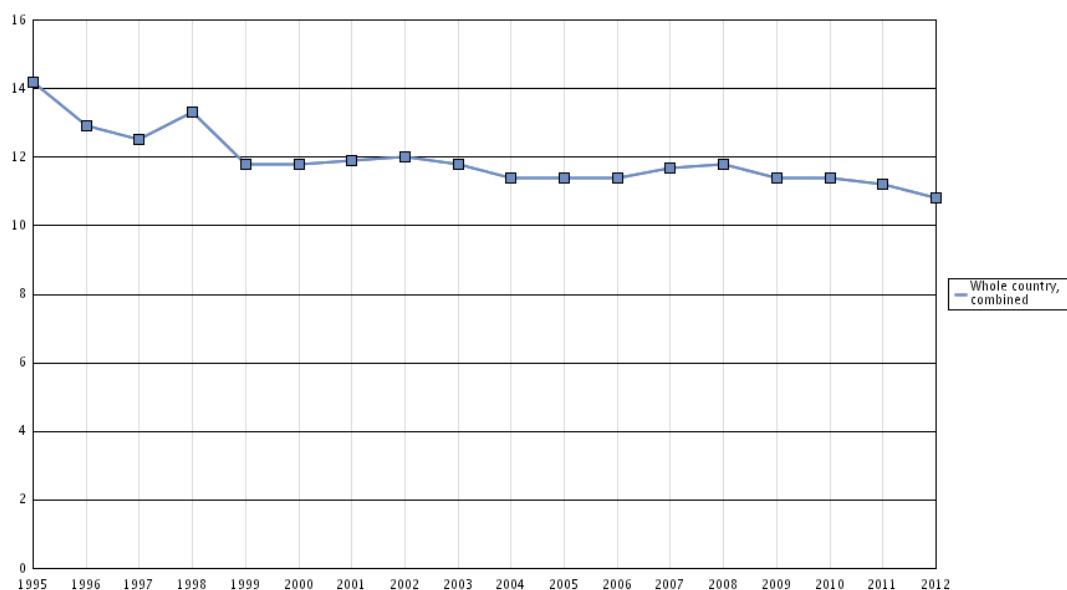


Reference: National Institute for Health and Welfare. SOTKANet Statistics and Indicator Bank 2005 – 2013



What about the amount of young people not in education or training?

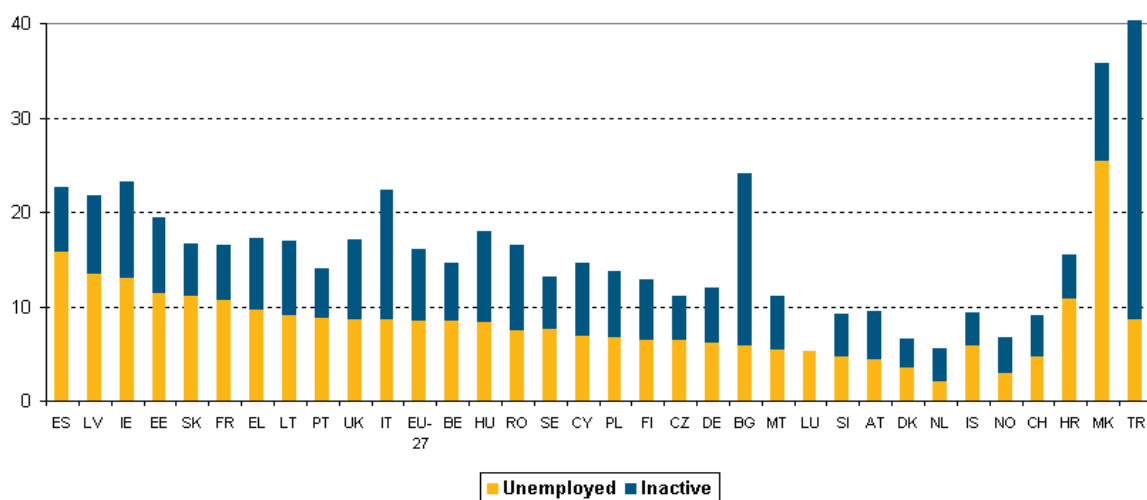
**Graph 2 People aged 17–24 not in education or training, as % of total population of same age.**



Reference: National Institute for Health and Welfare. SOTKANet Statistics and Indicator Bank 2005–2013

The amount of people aged 17–24 not in education or training has in fact been quite stable and even slightly sinking from 1995 to 2012 (Graph 2.). Graphic 3. shows the percentages of young people aged 18–24 not in education or employment in all European countries.

**Graph 3. People aged 18–24 not in education or employment (NEET) in European countries in 2009, as % of total population of same age.**



Reference: European Commission Eurostat.

The average of these young is as high as 16 % of the population aged 18–24. Here we can see that both the European understanding of NEET, which includes the unemployed job applicants and the way I understand the outsiders, described here as *inactive* (see 1.8.1). Finland is situated below the European Union's average with a percentage of 12–13 % of young people NEET.

## 1.4 Exclusion and media

Media is an important object of research and a well for collecting data. During the last decades new forms of media have arisen, which have gained more and more importance in people's everyday lives. Thanks to smart phones it is common to browse through various news sites and have conversations about them

both in social media and various Internet forums. Therefore media undoubtedly has huge impact on our understanding of the social world and social problems. However, in my thesis I am particularly interested in a phenomenon (the construction of a concept exclusion and the phenomenon exclusion of youth) happening in media, not media in itself.

In the social constructionist paradigm, to which I adhere, media is not understood as a mirror of social reality, but an active constructor of how we perceive and give meaning to that social reality. It defines exclusion and the excluded, the reasons behind exclusion and the possible ways to effect exclusion (Juppi 2011). The same goes for risk assessment – media creates that which is understood as risky (Hughes et al. 2006; Harrikari 2008). How much has media affected our understanding of for instance terrorist attacks as risky, diseases such as swine flu or AIDS as a gay men's disease? These are all constructions of risk narratives, told by the media (Hughes et al. 2006).

Exclusion has become more and more a specific problem of the youth (Juppi 2011) and part of the so called *youth problem* (Järvinen & Jahnukainen 2001, 130; 132). A significant amount of all discussion on exclusion in media has to do with youth, which is also a phase of life causing moral panics fairly easily (Juppi 2011). Therefore I look at media as a constructor of social risks and an instant affecting political reactions to that which is perceived as risky.

## 1.5 Exclusion – history and the European Union

Formerly social sciences were mainly interested in economic disparity – *poverty* – creating outsidership from the society. In the 1990s occurred a paradigmatic shift from poverty to exclusion. This paradigmatic shift began from France, where René Lenoir wrote “Les exclus” (The excluded) in 1974. Exclusion as a concept was supposed to be able to define the underprivileged in a more plural manner – not just as economic disparity, but also as social, cultural, educational and occupational disparity. It was also supposed to point out the process nature of the phenomenon. This paradigmatic shift was reflected to the ideas of the welfare state as well, which meant a shift in concentration from securing welfare provision to promoting social participation. (Higuchi 2014.) However, as we shall see later on, exclusion has discursively come to mean something else than the tasks it was originally assigned for indicate.

The European Union took up the concept of exclusion in the end of the 1980s after the publication of Lenoir’s work, but it spread wider as late as in the 1990s (Lister 2010, 161). In the European Union’s Treaty of Amsterdam (signed 1997, set into force 1999) “combating exclusion” became an explicit objective of European social policy. Nation states were obliged to create action plans for combating exclusion, more specifically “the integration of persons excluded from the labour market” (Treaty of Amsterdam 1999, articles 136–137). After the Lisbon treaty in 2007 the promotions of social inclusion and social cohesion have been central strategic goals of the European Union. In European Union’s politics social policy is mainly a method for developing economic competitiveness. Therefore combating social exclusion comes to

mean combating unemployment. Key words in this battle have been activation, efficacy, productivity, responsibility and the fight against dependency. (Palola 2010.) This awakens the question of how much of the exclusion discourse in Finland has in fact been imported from the European Union's politics.

After the paradigmatic shift exclusion has basically come to mean weak attachments between the society and the individual (Raunio 2006, 9). It is attached to poverty and oftentimes somewhat synonymous to unemployment or not attending any education. The concept arrived to Finnish social sciences as late as in the end of the 1970s. The concept was originally adopted from Swedish employment research's concept *utslagning* (uloslyönti, hitting off). In the 1980s it became a popular concept both in the academic world, the media and the coffee tables around the country. (Järvinen & Jahnukainen 2001, 129.) This phase has been called *the first boom of exclusion* (ibid.). Back then the emphasis of discussion was on poverty. The next boom sparked after the recession around the mid-1990s, when the focus of discussion was especially in long-term unemployment. I think this focus is still affecting the way exclusion is understood in Finland. This is *the second boom of exclusion*. Can it be said that we are now in the middle of *the third boom*, that has begun somewhere around the end of the 2000s and which's focus is the exclusion of youth?

## 1.6 Exclusion as a paradox

Exclusion is a complex and inconsistent concept, which has been highly criticized. Earlier Tuula Helne (2002) in her doctoral thesis has defined as many as 17 paradoxical features of exclusion discourse. I also understand exclusion to be by nature *a paradox* for five main reasons:

### 1) The society and the individual

Exclusion can be defined as a metaphor referring to being an outsider of a certain space or place. What is this place really? Is it for example the society, the welfare state, the community, good life or welfare (Suurpää 2009, 4)? Traditionally it has been understood to be the society, but it can also refer to spaces such as the education system or the labour market. (Hänninen et al. 2007, 5; Helne et al. 2004, 8). Therefore exclusion is fundamentally about the connections and disconnections between this space, usually understood as the society, and an individual. However the concept usually succeeds in only talking about individuals and ends up individualizing the reasons behind exclusion. The society is excellent at hiding and pretending to be innocent in the phenomenon of exclusion. (Helne 2002, 44.)

Furthermore, what are the prerequisites for attaining full membership of the society? Few examples of how to achieve value in the society are regular paid work, high enough education, beauty, money, youth and effectivity (Helne et al. 2004, 24). A very common way to achieve full membership and inclusion is wage-labour and when it comes to youth, also education.

## 2) Uniformity and homogeneity

Exclusion, as an understanding of being outside, refers to strangeness, difference and deviation. Therefore the excluded easily become construed as a homogeneous group with only anomaly and difference from the mainstream as their common indicators. (Angelin 2009, 51.)

Exclusion as a concept aims at illusionary societal homogeneity and a uniform community, which however can never be achieved since society is by nature heterogenic (Helne 2002, 36–39). Exclusion can therefore be understood as *otherness* from the included. An excluded is thus understood only in opposition and through an understanding of an included one. What really creates *us* as a homogeneous group, are in fact the excluded (ibid., 127). But all the people construed as *excluded* are, of course, a very multiple group of people in different phases of life, with different life histories, different identities and different capabilities (Sen 2009). The same idea can be applied to the included.

Implicitly the talk about exclusion includes a will to bring the excluded back to the centre, however without still quite wanting to include them (Helne 2004, 24). If this doesn't seem to be possible, at least it is important to be able to name the excluded, make them understandable and in this way controllable, governable (Helne 2002, 3). The society, in order to remain its illusionary homogeneous nature, needs for the excluded group to remain excluded. Exclusion is a metaphor and one might think that it is a metaphor of being an outsider. Rather it is better to conceptualize it as a metaphor of innerness and togetherness. (Ibid., 36–39.)

### 3) Normality and normativity

Saying that one is excluded, includes the idea that they should be something else (that is included) and how to achieve this inclusion (to become *normal* citizens). As pointed out earlier, the excluded are given meaning to as a seemingly homogeneous group with abnormality being their common indicator. This way exclusion becomes pathologized. Pathologization of the excluded is also preliminary control of the society – it tells the citizens what one needs to be in order to be normal and remain in the centre of the society (Helne 2004, 40–41).

### 4) The difference between subjective experiences and the societal categorizations can be vast

Finnish youth themselves think that the main reason behind exclusion is loneliness and lack of friends (Myllyniemi 2009). However according to statistics exclusion is very much understood as lack of employment or education. Do the ones categorized as excluded think of themselves as excluded? Like one boy in a Finnish documentary about youth's exclusion "Hilton" (2012) describes this ambiguity: "I'm irritated when people say that you're going to be excluded soon, that you're dropping out of this society [-] I just think that it's awful to think that I, too, would in some way be excluded."<sup>1</sup> This paragraph describes the

---

<sup>1</sup> ”Ärsyttää ku jengi on et sä syrjädyt kohta täst yhteiskunnast putoot. [-] Mun mielest se on kauheet ajatella et mäki oisin jollai taval syrjäytyny.”



paradoxical relations between subjective experiences, how exclusion is understood in the society at large and the identifications coming from outside the individual.

When it comes to youth's exclusion, the difference between subjective interpretations and experiences and societal or statistical categorizations is even wider than when researching adult's exclusion (Suurpää et al. 2009, 9). Therefore it is highly important to question and take into account, how exclusion is defined and how research succeeds in reaching subjective experiences of the people in question.

#### 5) Naturality vs. relationality

Exclusion cannot be understood at all without contextualization. More precisely exclusion can be said to be the process, through which an individual becomes an outsider of this vaguely defined space or place (Hänninen ym. 2007, 5). On the other hand it can be said that the concept fails to describe a process and ends up describing the result.

This result has been characterized as an end of all movement, a stop sign where it seems unlikely for one to be able to change direction or to go forward. (Helne 2002, 8.) This means that after having ended up in a category of the excluded, it becomes a fairly permanent identity. In this way exclusion cannot be understood without the knowledge of its context – however at the same time exclusion is pursuing in appearing as a highly natural and even final state of identity.

## **1.7 Exclusion, marginalization and diversion – conceptual positionings**

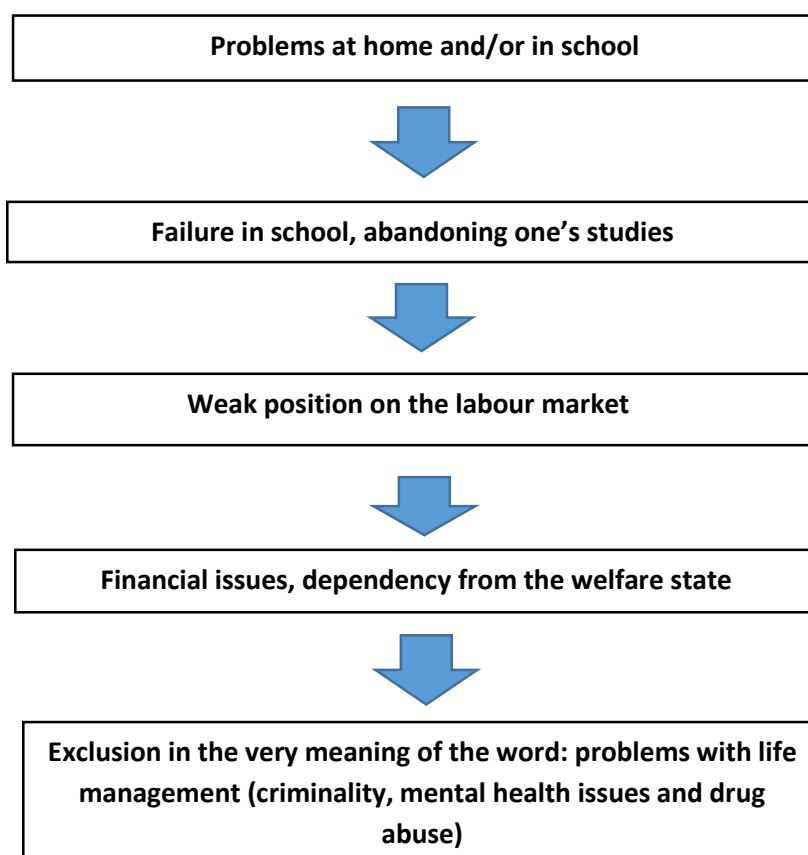
There is less research on the concept of marginalization than on exclusion, which remains as the primary concept to describe outsiderness even though the concept has been highly criticized. Marginalization, in comparison to exclusion, can be seen as a less stigmatizing concept, though not by any means completely free of stigmatization (Raunio 2006, 53). It's time to make a quick theoretical comparison between the two very similar, but after all quite distinctive concepts. Whereas exclusion is defining an individual from the outside, marginalization can be seen as making it possible to look at the phenomenon from the marginalized's own perspective and their own meaning-making processes (Juhila 2006, 105). Secondly, exclusion can be said to define the whole life of a person and the whole individual identity as well. Marginalization does not necessarily do this, for one can be marginalized on one sphere of life and mainstream on another.

Thirdly, exclusion sees all excluded people more or less in a homogeneous way. Marginalization on the other hand makes it possible to emphasize the heterogeneity of the marginal. (Jokinen *ym.* 2004, 12–13.) Furthermore, the societal status of the excluded is systematically low, whereas the status of marginalized can be anything from low to high (Järvinen & Jahnukainen 2001, 142). This quick and simplifying comparison shows that there are important theoretical dissimilarities between the two concepts but at the same time these dissimilarities are in fact theoretical and may have very little to do with people's actual lives on the sidetracks. Anna Angelin (2009, 58) has described these concepts as analytical perspectives and as simplifications. The

dichotomy between inclusion and exclusion or marginalization does not succeed in grasping the variety of lifestyles inside these analytical simplifications.

Exclusion can be understood as a process of accumulating risks, which eventually lead to exclusion in its very meaning. This is called *the process model of exclusion*. Here the focus is in the accumulating events during an individual life course. Usually the process is understood to begin already in early childhood and it has been described as different stages, the last of them being the ultimate exclusion with mental disorders, criminality and substance abuse. (Järvinen & Jahnukainen 2001, 133–135.)

**Graph 4. The process model of exclusion (Järvinen & Jahnukainen 2011, 135), translation IH.**



This theory has however been criticized for its determinism. It also understands risks primarily as accumulating events, without taking into account the possible protective mechanisms. Furthermore, the process model of exclusion only takes into account the process that begins already in the early childhood. However it is possible to start the process from half-way. The process model is most likely to happen when there are only few protective mechanisms in the individual life. (Järvinen & Jahnukainen 2001, 133–137.)

Tuula Helne (2002, 7) on the other hand has described exclusion as mostly a motionless state of affairs, the end result of a certain process and as stagnation. She points out that rather than being the description of a process, the term exclusion usually ends up describing only the result. This is also true to the process model, since Järvinen and Jahnukainen (2011, 134) describe only the last step of the process with “the very meaning of the word exclusion”.

Rather it could be fruitful to understand exclusion as a process forming from various battles and negotiations defined by power relations (Hänninen ym. 2007, 6). It is possible to understand the movement in the metaphorical stairs, scale or spiral to go both ways and this would most likely be a more productive way of signifying exclusion. This leaves space for understanding exclusion as various spaces of life – a person can be included in one and excluded from another. Furthermore, exclusion is not a final, stabile state but constantly changing, both on an individual, the societal and the conceptual level.

Marginalization has been conceptualized in at least three diverse ways: as overlapping circles, as steps away from the mainstream

and as exotic spaces of life. Marginalization is, just like exclusion, a relational concept, finding its definition in the very context it is used. Marginalization is not about being worse, it's about being different from the point of comparison, quite often the mainstream (Juhila 2006, 105). One of the most important things about the concept is that it is potentially a place of resistance and progress (Helne et al. 2004, 44). I understand marginalization as multiple life circles that are on top of and cutting each other. This way a young can be included in one circle, whilst being excluded from another. (Ibid., 8–9.) This way of understanding marginalization captures the relationality of the phenomenon and the multiple nature of one's life. This is connected to one of my research questions – how exclusion is understood in public media? Is it a stable state of life and mind or does it reflect these multiple circles?

Secondly, exclusion and marginalization have been conceptualized as steps from the inner circle of the society (mainstream) further (marginalization) and even further (exclusion). Understood this way, marginalization can be defined as *being an outsider on the inside*. (Helne 2002, 174–175). Or being in the side (*vid sidan av*), but not outside (*men inte utanför*) of the society (Angelin 2009, 55).

Marginalization may in many aspects be a more useful concept than exclusion, but it sure is not perfect. Using this concept marginalized spaces have often been described as exotic (Suutari & Suurpää 2001, 5). Like this: “Living in the marginal [-] can be a prominent position, from which one can look at the society and one's own life from a bit of a different perspective.” (Granfelt 1998, 92; translation IH). Or even like this: “living in the marginal can be a refreshing opportunity to open up new insights

into living in the normal sphere of the society. One can come back from the marginal renewed back to the normal mainstream.” (Raunio 2006, 57; translation IH).

Diversion (Finn. *syrjäyttäminen*, *poiskäännyttäminen*) is a third concept used referring to exclusion. Diversion emphasizes society’s role and responsibility in the process of exclusion. Kyösti Raunio (2006, 63–69) has divided diversion into two categories: removal (*poisto*) and rejection (*torjunta*). The first one of them, removal, is a form of faceless power that is based on and made valid through macro level agents, such as the market economy. Rejection on the other hand is a form of open use of power, where the subject and object of the power relation are visible. Rejection can happen for example in the office of a social worker. In the theoretical framework of analytics of government diversion is understood as a technology of governance and its aim is to direct people’s behavior in order to govern them. According to this view people are helped to help themselves.<sup>ii</sup> Diversion cannot be separated from power structures and networks of power. (Hänninen ym. 2007, 8–56.)

Altogether I am somewhat critical towards categorizing people as either achievers or excluded. Raija Julkunen (2004, 261) points out the possibility of thinking rather of susceptibility to different kinds of risks. We are all potentially vulnerable to the same risks so what do we ultimately achieve by dichotomous categorizations? While digging deeper and deeper into the theoretical backgrounds of the conceptual debates of exclusion and finding out about the alternative or overlapping concepts I have become more and more critical towards the whole concept *exclusion*. It seems to be a highly stigmatizing concept with very little capability of grasping the multi-dimensional phenomenon

it is trying to describe. And very little capability of describing whatsoever. Anna Angelin (2009) has described exclusion as a “catch-all-phrase”, which has somewhat lost its power. Still, on the grounds of its constant popularity in the public media debate, I am forced to use this concept in my thesis, even though I would rather reject it.

## 1.8 Theoretical framework: analytics of government

Analytics of government started as a loose community of interdisciplinary researchers mostly in Great Britain but also in Canada, Australia and The United States after Michel Foucault’s writings had gained popularity in Britain in the 1970s. The community of researchers began paying attention to power structures, subjectivity, norms and the mundane, scooping from Michel Foucault’s terminology and conceptions but also from a range of theoretical traditions.. First writings of governance were published in the end of the 1980s, and governmentality studies formed over the 1990s. (Miller & Rose 2008, 2–16.)

Analytics of government is pursuing in answering the question *why* instead of *what*. It is pointing out the networks of actions and relations that lead to certain forms of governing – that is certain ways of attempting to influence the lives of individuals and groups. (Miller & Rose 2008, 14–15.) The goal in governing is that people would begin to evaluate and change their behavior through *self-government*. The goal therefore is to create individuals that are autonomous and able to conduct their own behavior. This happens also through shaping citizens’ wishes and needs according to this desired kind of behavior (Dean 1995, 578).

Government is about making visible what good, proper and responsible behavior is. This is called *conduct of conduct* or *politics of conduct*. (Dean 1999, 11–12.)

Governmentality happens through two kinds of intertwining mechanisms:

- 1) Rationalities of government
- 2) Technologies of government

Rationalities of government are patterns of thought that make reality more understandable and calculative. Technologies of government are the tools for governing individuals' behavior. (Miller & Rose 2008.)

A significant concept in analytics of government is the norm and being outside of it. The ones breaking the norm are more and more categorized as “antisocial”. I ask in my thesis, what is the norm for an ideal citizen and how is this ideal to be achieved? An important factor in today's society is the growing impact of market rationalities and technologies. They function in order to increase individual *autonomy* and create *responsible* citizens. Furthermore, from the point of view of neoliberalism, citizenship should mean being productive and *active*. Quite often the government happens through the illusion of individual freedom of choice. (Miller & Rose 2008, 122.) The goal for an autonomous, independent, responsible and active citizenship is in the center of my thesis creating its theoretical background. I am now representing four major conceptual frameworks, which are all tightly linked together: active citizenship, responsibility, autonomy and risk politics.



### 1.8.1 Active citizenship in an active society

Chantal Mouffe (1992, 225) has said that “the way we define citizenship is intimately linked to the kind of [-] community we want.” There are three major theories for defining citizenship: liberalism, republicanism and communitarism (Lister & Pia 2008). The first one of them emphasizes citizenship rights, the middle citizenship as participation and the last citizenship duties.

Sociologist T.H. Marshall’s (1950, 28–29) famous definition of citizenship is:

Citizenship is a *status* bestowed on those who are *full members of a community*. All who possess the status are *equal* with respect to *the rights and duties* with which the status is endowed. There is no universal principle that determines what those rights and duties shall be, but societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create *an image of an ideal citizenship* against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspiration can be directed. (Emphasis IH)

According to Marshall, citizenship is earned through full membership of a community. Through citizenship individuals become equal and the same citizenship rights and duties touch upon them. Furthermore there cannot be said to exist any universal ideal of citizenship, but the ideal is constantly changing.

In today’s sociopolitical debate the relationship between citizenship rights and duties is a regular hot potato. Marshall (1950) divides citizenship rights into political and social rights and rights of freedom. When it comes to exclusion, especially the middle one can be seen as being of high relevance. Social rights and social citizenship, which is brought to one through the ownership of these rights, refers to the right to social security and social services. But according to Marshall it also refers to one’s

right to live a respectable life according to the environment's standards, which brings the relationality into the study of social citizenship. (Ibid., 28).

However, today social citizenship is being challenged by economic, political and social factors. These include the abandonment of neo-Keynesian economic management, globalization, the massive increase in information and communication technology and new large economies entering the world market. Furthermore there are changes in the states' welfare provision, which include the emergence of new social risks and movement from direct to indirect means of providing welfare. (Taylor-Goody 2009, 20-26.) According to Peter Taylor-Goody (ibid.) the three basic values of social citizenship – inclusion, reciprocity and trust – are now being challenged by independence, individualism and uncertainty.

T. H. Marshall's theory has been criticized as marginalizing and seemingly universal. Ruth Lister (1998, 7) has written about *marginal citizenship*, which includes those that the mainstream citizenship excludes – that could be for instance the elderly, the handicapped, women, gays and youth. What then has happened to social citizenship, if all these groups (and more) are in the marginals of citizenship? We can talk about the post-marshallian understanding of citizenship according to which citizenship has become conditional and based on responsibilities (Saastamoinen 2010).

Sociologists seem to somewhat agree on the conditional nature of today's social citizenship but there is no agreement on what the conditions for full membership of the society in fact are. Peter Taylor-Goody (2009, 31) has suggested that citizenship's

qualitative nature has been reformulated – it has begun to demand activity, individuality and engagement whilst at the same time it has become less solidary. Lister et al. (2007, 48-49) emphasize being recognized as the core quality of citizenship. Mitchell Dean and Nicholas Rose (Dean 1995, Rose 2000) have talked about welfare institutions' major role in an *active society* in defying appropriate and legitimate behavior, with the politics of conduct as their primary tool. Furthermore, citizens' success in maintaining this appropriate behavior can be seen as a condition for full citizenship. (Rose 2000, 1407; Dean 1995, 578.) All these may just be different sides of one coin.

The post-marshallian citizenship is a lot based on active citizenship, which refers to succeeded life management, proactivity in governing one's own risks and the ability to make good decisions (Saastamoinen 2010). Raija Julkunen (1998a, 180) points out that activity has not been invented lately, but it has always been around. Conservatives have always been afraid of social allowances making people unwilling to work and not taking responsibility over their own lives. In addition to conservatism, active citizenship's political roots can be located to monetarism. Active citizenship's triumph began in Great Britain in the 1980s. Conservative governments run by Margaret Thatcher and John Major diminished the role of the welfare state and the responsibility of state making room for active citizenship. During this time active citizenship was mainly understood as will to offer one's own time and money in the form of charity work in order to help the society. Julkunen (ibid.) has called the coming up of activity "an ideological mishmash" with three focal points. First of all activations are pursued in order to combat exclusion brought on by

unemployment, second of all in order to combat dependency culture and third of all the waste of human resources in the form of unemployment.

Later on the concept of active citizenship played a major role in the Third Way politics. New Labour with its leader Tony Blair demanded citizenship duties next to citizenship rights. In addition to this, in the center of Third Way politics there was the call for individual responsibility and involvement in society, mainly through wage-labour. First of all, sociopolitical incentives are set up and if they don't seem to work, social security is made more and more equivalential. (Lister et al. 2007, 57; Julkunen 1998a, 183–185.) Solidarity as an attitude lost its meaning and the concern about abuse of social security was awakened. In the name of active citizenship those living off hard-working tax-payers and those allergic to work became a major threat to the society.

The governance of those failing in the above mentioned criteria has become more intense and people become categorized as being either *included* or *excluded*. The latter are shown in a fairly bad light as cautioning examples. The included ones have the proper capabilities to get by their role as active citizens and as parts of responsible, moral communities. The ones excluded on the other hand are seen as being either part of no communities whatsoever or as members of anti-communities. Activity is an irresistible concept with highly positive connotations.

I interpret the public debate as an instance of politics of conduct therefore forming that which is perceived as ideal citizenship. Public debate as politics of conduct characterizes the conditions for full membership of the community, for full citizenship. These

formations happen through discourses maintained by the public debate.

### 1.8.2 Responsibility

Responsibility can be understood as *an idea of mutual responsibility*, which refers to empathy and individual ability to compassion towards those who are not doing as good as oneself (Juhila 2006, 156). Peter Taylor-Gooby (2009, 28-29) has defined reciprocity as one of the core values of social citizenship. Reciprocity is trust in others taking responsibility if one is too weak to do it by themselves. However, mutual responsibility is now challenged with individual responsibility (Juhila 2006, 156) and reciprocity with individualism (Taylor-Gooby 2009).

According to Raija Julkunen (2006, 9) “the discourse of responsibility is here now and we all are spoken to in the name of responsibility” (translation IH). She calls this the discourse of individual responsibility, by which she refers to both the growing demand for corporate responsibility in producing welfare and subjective responsibility of every citizen. Citizenship rights become intertwined with citizenship duties. An example of this is the income support law (*laki toimeentulotuesta* 1412/1997) 10.1 § 1 k. and 10.3 § 2 k where the citizenship right of sufficient income is subjected to the citizenship duty of paid work or pursuing it through education.

Communitarism emphasizes the obligations of citizenship and sees them as a prerequisite for rights. Furthermore it is an ideology that understands community as the very locus of moral order. Therefore it is the community that defines what individual

good life is and sees the belonging to this community as a constitutive element of citizenship. (Lister & Pia 2008, 15–21.) According to communitarism, an individual is supposed to, in addition to taking care of themselves, take care of their families, relatives and nearby communities (Miller & Rose 2008, 134). Responsibility over care and welfare has therefore shifted from the welfare state more and more to families, communities and individuals.

Responsibility has become a part of everyday welfare work – social work is trying to combat exclusion more and more through making individuals responsible over their own lives. A key function in this process is *empowerment*, through which individuals should learn to take responsibility over themselves and help themselves (Miller & Rose 2008, 120-123; Hänninen et al. 2007, 77). Dean (1999, 67) has defined empowerment as a technology that produces individuals as active citizens. Empowerment has been criticized for its stabile and unchanging concept of power, according to which an individual either has or does not have power. It assumes a powerless subject, to whom a social worker may share power from above. (Fook 2002, 104.)

### 1.8.3 Autonomy and the fight against social dependency

There is an increased apprehension in sociopolitical debate over the formation of a new underclass and a social dependency culture from the 1970s onwards. According to Dean and Taylor-Gooby (1992, 86) an existence of a dependency culture would require a sub-cultural departure from mainstream values. The idea of a dependency culture rests on three core points. Firstly,

the account of a subject as *homo economicus*, as a rational decision-maker. Secondly, a certain understanding of motivation – what is it that motivates people to action, to work or to stay on social security? Thirdly it involves an account of improper and proper dependency. Improper dependency refers to being dependent of state welfare whereas dependency on wage-labour is understood as proper dependency or usually even independence. Also taking care and nurturing of one's nearby people is construed as very understandable but when one needs nurturing from the welfare state, dependency becomes something highly suspicious. (Ibid.) Doubts about fiddling the welfare system, free money and abuse are awakened (Julkunen 2001, 186). Often exclusion is understood to equal dependency, mostly from the welfare state (Juhila 2006, 208).

Dependency is a multidimensional concept. The Western welfare state has taken shape after the Second World War to compensate the various risks that citizens face during their lives. Now that the paradigm has shifted to fighting against social dependency and celebrating maximal individual freedom, more and more succeeded risk control is demanded from the citizens themselves. (Rose 2000, 1400-1401.) Dependency tends to be regarded as an undesirable aspect of human condition (Dean & Taylor-Gooby 1992, 150). It has become more and more pathologized and individualized. (Dean 1999, 60-62.) As said, uniquely problematic is dependency on state welfare. One becomes dependent on social security benefits once they have failed as responsible citizens able to take care of their own risks. Dean (ibid., 167) has described the dichotomy between active citizens and at-risk groups as follows:

One can identify an emergent division between active citizens (capable of managing their own risk) and targeted populations ([...] the 'at risk') who require intervention in the management of risks

The idea of social dependency is linked to the parallelism of rights and duties in the context of social citizenship. If an individual fails to fulfill their duties, they're not understood to be entitled to their rights either. (Dean & Taylor-Gooby 1992, 152.) Hartley Dean and Peter Taylor-Gooby (ibid., 150) understand dependency as "a universal condition of all social beings". Therefore it can be said that "no one is capable of managing on their own" (Juhila 2006, 167-169; translation IH).

Autonomy however does not mean that an individual could do whatever they want. Autonomy requires unconditional morality, hard work and responsibility over oneself and one's nearby people. (Rose 2000, 1400-1401; Julkunen 2006, 141.) This is how the fight against social dependency is closely intertwined with the call for citizens' responsible behavior (see 1.8.2). Responsibility can even be seen as pretty much the opposite of passivity and dependency (Julkunen 2006, 206).

It is noteworthy to point out that according to Dean and Taylor-Gooby's research (1992, 124) there cannot be found any kind of dependency culture. On the contrary their respondents, claimants of social security, by and large subscribe to mainstream values, norms and lifestyles. Therefore instead of worrying about the dependency culture it might be useful to highlight the mutuality of our interdependence as human subjects (ibid., 176).



#### 1.8.4 Risk politics and moral panics

Exclusion of youth in the public media is by no means understood as a threat (*uhka*), a danger (*vaara*) and a risk (*riski*). Risk thinking has been in the rise in social sciences from 1970s and especially from mid-1980s onwards. A famous sociological theorization of risk is German sociologist Ulrich Beck's (1992) declaration of an emerging risk society and of risks characteristic for modernization. However I am not here that interested in the ways risk has become so central in society in the course of modernization, but of the complex ways of this affecting individual lives, of people managing these risks and even more on risk assessment and management.

Nikolas Rose (2007, 70) defines risk as follows:

a family of ways of thinking and acting that involve calculations about probable futures in the present followed by interventions into the present in order to control that potential future.

Risks are therefore about some identifiable factors, some of which may be manageable. Starting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a set of strategies for risk thinking occurred. It was attempted to find risk factors that would “enable the identification of high risk groups and hence permit authorities to intervene upon those falling within such groups in a preventive [-] manner” (ibid., 71). This is called *risk assessment*.

Risk assessment presumes an assumption of an objective world of risks, which is somehow discoverable, quantifiable, measurable and controllable (Gabe 1995). Risk assessment occurs to be very strong when it comes to the exclusion of youth. What is wrong with these young's families? What is wrong with these

young neurologically? How are they doing in school? But the problem here is that every single one of these questions succeeds in grasping only a small slice of the whole cake – the process called exclusion. In addition, Järvinen and Jahnukainen (2001, 137) point out, that exclusion is attached to an adult-like position in the society or being outside of it. At what age is it even possible to talk about the risk of exclusion?

The rise of risk thinking has been conceptualized as a shift from welfare politics to risk politics. Risk politics consists of risk, the concern and interference. World starts to come out as unpredictable, unsafe and frightening. The basis of risk politics is a constant feeling of crisis and danger. (Harrikari 2008.) The important question with risk politics is, whether politics begins to focus on governing risky behavior or affecting the societal structures producing risky behavior. How easily does risk politics become individual instead of structural?

Mitchell Dean (1999, 177; 183) has said that there is no such thing as a risk, it is just a way to make the society calculable and governable. Risk is therefore a form of governance in itself (Hutter 2006, 214-215). Risks are governed by risk technologies. As pointed out earlier, people think of themselves more and more responsible over their own risks and decisions they make. Therefore in the end the governance of risks becomes self-governance. (Dean 1999, 183.) Active citizenship has been theorized as succeeded self-governance of risks, whereas exclusion is therefore understood as passivity and failure in the self-governance of risks (Saastamoinen 2010). This is tightly attached to the individualization of responsibility (1.8.2) and the demand for autonomy (1.8.3).

If something is perceived as risky, a moral panic may occur. Nikolas Rose (1999, orig. 1989; 125) has defined moral panics as follows:

repetitive and predictable social occurrences in which certain persons or phenomena come to symbolize a range of social anxieties concerning threats to the established order and traditional values, the decline of morality and social discipline, and the need to take firm steps in order to prevent a downward spiral into disorder.

Moral panic also includes one-sided views on its object, exaggeration of the threat posed by the phenomenon and building up a moral defense for combating the phenomenon (Juppi 2011).

## **2 DATA AND METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Data**

I have decided to include to my data all opinion pieces, columns and editorials from a newspaper Helsingin Sanomat with search words *nuor\** AND *syrjäyty\** (*youth\** AND *exclu\**) from years 2008–2013. I have collected the data using the newspaper's electric archive and its search engine.

Editorials are written by the editorial staff, columns can also include visiting writers, such as researchers and experts. Opinion pieces are a forum for all citizens, politicians and experts where they can offer their opinion pieces. However, it is noteworthy, that these pieces are also chosen for publication by the staff.

From my point of view opinion pieces, editorials and columns provide the best source for researching the public debate, the discourses used and the construction processes of the phenomenon.

I have chosen not to include news articles, since they aim at some amount of objectivity therefore not providing the kind of source of information specifically interesting for my research purposes. However news articles would offer interesting data for researching specialist or political meaning-making processes of exclusion.

Helsingin Sanomat is a national newspaper from the capital of Finland. Its circulation is the largest in Finland with almost two million weekly readers (KMT 2013). For further research purposes it would be interesting to include other newspapers from Finland, and even from Europe, as well. But for this thesis's purposes Helsingin Sanomat, as a newspaper read all over Finland, provides a limited yet sufficient source for research data.

I have collected my data beginning in 2008, when the debate sparked, and ending to the end of 2013. I have 79 articles from 2008, 35 from 2009, 84 from 2010, 85 from 2011, 152 from 2012 and 69 from 2013<sup>iii</sup>. Altogether this makes 504 articles. The available data with my search words *nuor\** AND *syrjäyty\** (*youth\** AND *exclu\**) was 107 from 2008, 47 from 2009, 114 from 2010, 119 from 2011, 170 from 2012 and 86 from 2013. However, it is noteworthy that quite often only a part of the whole data ends up in the very focus of the analyzing process (Jokinen et al. 1999, 241).

Social and political events effect that which is discussed in the public media debate and in what way. Some major events during the time frame of my data have been the following:

November 2007 Jokela school shooting

2008 the beginning of the financial crisis

September 2008 Kauhajoki school shooting

2008-2012 global recession

July 2011 Massacres in Oslo and Utoya, Norway

August 2011 Riots in London

August 2012 Ihana tavallisia asioita –website and –leaflet

January 2013 The youth guarantee

Exclusion of youth is a wide topic that is in addition to social policy attached to especially education policy, criminal policy and health policy. This forced me to carefully consider, which kinds of prerequisites are necessary to my data collection. I have selected out all articles dealing with exclusion in general or for example exclusion of the elderly. I have also decided to leave out articles where the *main focus is somewhere else than exclusion of youth*. There are a lot of articles where youth's exclusion is mentioned, but the article's main focus is a theme not primarily linked to youth's exclusion. However if an article discussed for instance reforms of education policy as a solution to youth's exclusion, it became a part of my data. Also articles, where exclusion of youth has been listed in between all the other things that are at the moment going wrong in Finnish politics and society have been selected out.

I have selected out articles discussing riots in London, Great Britain in autumn 2011 and the massacres in Norway in July 2011, unless they have taken a stance on Finnish youth politics – which most of them actually have. This is because my point of

view is in Finnish media and how exclusion is understood here. This is why I have taken in to account in my thesis all the articles handling the school shootings in Kauhajoki in autumn 2008, if they have discussed the topic from the point of view of exclusion. I think that one of the main reasons for sparked debate on exclusion in 2008 can have been the school shootings in Kauhajoki. For one reason or another, this shooting sparked a debate on particularly exclusion, whereas the first major school shooting in Jokela high school in 2007 did not so much. Another possible reason behind the accelerated discussion is the financial crisis and the recession in 2008, which forced the society to think of ways to combat youth's growing unemployment. A concerning phenomenon around this time has also been the demographic changes by the population getting older.

After this selecting out, the final data came to be from 71–75 % every year of the whole data available with these search words, except year 2012 when my data is as high as 89 % of the whole data available (table 1.). I think this may have to do with the major amount of hits in 2012 – when the debate has increased a lot, it can be seen to be on the very topic exclusion of youth. Can it even be said that the public has found the topic in 2012?

**Table 1. Qualitative data compared to all available data in Helsingin Sanomat, years 2008-13.**

Year	My data (frequencies)	All data (Frequencies)	Percentages (%)
2008	79	107	75
2009	35	47	75
2010	84	114	74
2011	85	119	71
2012	152	170	89
2013	69	86	80

In my data topics that come up under the rubric “exclusion of youth” vary from more or less obvious stances on education, mental health and social welfare to much less obvious such as the military service. I soon came to think of exclusion of youth during the past years as a *card* that can be played in the public debate that can be seen to be even slightly attached to youth, their welfare or people’s general welfare. Exclusion is such a hot topic that playing this card out seems to make any argument or any stance on pretty much any topic much heavier.

I have categorized all my data by their *main topic* into eight categories: education policy, leisure, employment policy, general discussion on exclusion, parenthood, welfare system, money and other. These categories were the most common topics of discussion. I began this analysis by going through my data and naming main topics for each article and I soon noticed which of the topics were most popular. At first I had many more categories, than

I am going to present here. After some of my original categories came to be too small for comparative purposes, I incorporated them into some similar categories. This happened for criminal policy, political inclusion and health policy for instance. Some of the articles discuss two or more topics. Usually the main topic is visible already in the headline of the article and in the first chapter.

Education policy consists of articles discussing for example raising the age limit of compulsory education, classless high school, apprenticeship, bullying and school health care. Topic leisure consists of discussions on youth work, hobbies, friends, loneliness and Internet. Exclusion in general encompasses areas such as immigration policy and exclusion of immigrants, the school shootings, violence and the campaign “Ihan tavallisia asioita”. Incorporating the campaign into this category is the main reason, why discussion on general exclusion jumps up considerably during year 2012. The campaign kindled quite an intense debate on the topic exclusion in public media.

Riitta Jallinoja (2006) has analyzed the growing concern on parental capability during years 1999-2003. This is why I have chosen to include the category of “parenthood” to my analysis, just to show that the debate on parents’ capability of raising their children is no longer understood as a particular concern among the public media. There are only a couple of articles each year concerned about families and parents as their main topic. Later on we shall find out that even though this is not the main topic, the familialistic discourse is by no means dead yet.

Articles under the rubric work policy discuss mostly unemployment and the possible ways of increasing youth’s employment.



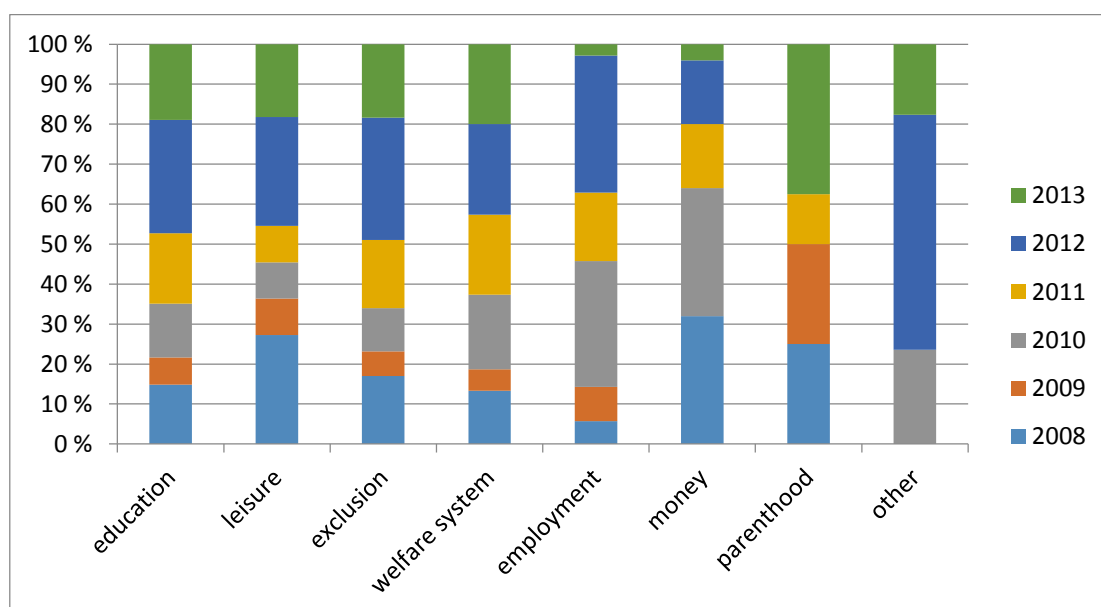
The category welfare system consists of child welfare services, youth's health issues, homelessness, overweight, disability pensions and mental health services. Articles discussing money are mainly concerned on youth getting into debt and especially payday loans business. The rest of my data I have put into the category "other" – articles in this category discuss mainly military service, but also for example cannabis.

**Table 2. Topics in the debate on exclusion of youth in Helsingin Sanomat in years 2008-2013.**

TOPIC	PERCENTAGES (%)	FREQUENCIES
Education policy	27,9	141
Leisure	8,3	42
General exclusion	27,0	136
Welfare system	15,1	76
Employment policy	15,3	77
Money	2,4	12
Parenthood	0,6	3
Other	3,4	17
Total (n=504)	100,0	504

By categorizing my data, I came to notice some trends every year. Discussion on employment policy basically starts during year 2010 and remains as the main concern after that. Education policy is quite a constant topic over all the years.

**Graph 5. Topics in Helsingin Sanomat on exclusion of youth during years 2008-2013, by year.**



What is really interesting here is the way we can already see some results. Discussion on youth's exclusion is in fact quite a lot discussion on education and work politics and exclusion in general. The way leisure or welfare system don't really spark conversation is highly interesting. Especially since, as said before, youth themselves see the lack of friends as the main reason for exclusion (Myllyniemi 2009).

## 2.2 Methodology – social constructionism and discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is connected to the linguistic turn in social sciences. At this time social research started to emphasize texts not as pure and natural reflectors of a consistent reality but as instances construing reality. “Words and phrases [were no longer seen as] ready packaged with a specific delimited meaning that a researcher can be sure to know as if they were fixed and self-contained”, Parker (1999, 2) describes this shift of emphasis. Therefore the public media debate on youth’s exclusion is creating meanings and affecting our way of understanding the world and the phenomenon in question. This can also be problematic, since all knowledge becomes discourse. Discourse analysis has been criticized for “all that is left is a post-modern politics of fracture, confrontation and self-reflection.” (Hughes & Sharrock 2007, 328). However discourses both are based on social world and form it, they are not separate from it (Jokinen et al. 1999, 20-21).

Discourse analysis finds its theoretical home in the tradition of *social constructionism*. In this tradition a phenomenon is understood to become meaningful through differentiations and in relation to its context. These contexts are affected by power structures. (Jokinen et al. 1999, 39.) Social constructionism understands world not as something stabile, authentic and natural but as constructed through social and cultural meaning-making processes. One way of creating these socially constructed meanings is the public debate and media. Social constructionist analysis is paying attention to the taken-for-granted social processes and

aims at revealing their constructed and historical nature (Lister 2010, 143).

The prerequisite for social constructionist analysis is the idea that nowadays its object is considered to be self-evident and inevitable. This means that the socially constructed nature of the phenomenon in question, in my case exclusion or exclusion as a risky problem facing especially youth, is not quite understood. The basis of social constructionism is the idea that its object would not necessarily have to exist or it wouldn't have to be the way it is. Exclusion is therefore understood as contingent. Usually social constructionist analysis goes on to the realization that its object is somewhat undesirable as it is now and that we would get along better if the idea of the object was changed radically. (Hacking 2009, orig. 1999.) This is also called *critical discourse analysis*, which is based on an understanding of submissive power relations and revealing their functioning mechanisms (Jokinen et al. 1999, 86).

Social constructionist analysis must take into account the building blocks of its object. How the phenomenon is put into pieces in the process of social construction? (Hacking 2009, orig. 1999; 78.) In my analysis these building blocks come together from the articles in the public media debate and the speech creating youth's exclusion.

### 2.3 Unpiecing the jigsaw puzzle – discourse analysis as a methodological tool

*A discourse* has been understood in various ways. It can be seen as a (fixed) pattern of meaning that helps us make sense of the world and each other. It can also be seen as a structure reproducing relations of power. (Parker 1999, 3; Jokinen et al. 2004, 191.) Furthermore discourse can be seen as modes of thought (foucauldian tradition of discourse analysis) or as linguistically constructed entities (communication research, which does not need to take a stance on the world outside the particular communicational situation) (Hughes & Sharrock 2007, 328; Jokinen et al. 1999). I understand discourses mainly as patterns of looking at the world that are at the same time creating reality.

Discourse analysis focuses on three key aspects of language. The first one of them is *contradiction*. Here the analysis of a text is trying to grasp the different meanings at work in a text, instead of trying to find some underlying theme. This is about concentrating on the very meanings and on research questions aiming at answering the question *what*. Secondly discourse analysis focuses on *construction* – how these different meanings are socially constructed in and through the text. This second aspect again aims at answering questions *how*. The third key aspect is *practice*. What are the discourses doing? What kinds of power relations are they creating? What about what kinds of subject positions and places for agency do they provide? (Parker 1999, 6–7; Jokinen et al. 1999, 70–76.)

Discourse analysis makes possible to grasp the various categorizations and power structures created in written speech. A certain discourse is understood to create certain *subject positions*. What

kinds of identities are created for the speaker, for the young and for other people and institutions involved in a certain discourse? Discourse analysis puts emphasis not on what is being said, but on what is being done by saying something – how the speech is creating social reality. (Jokinen et al. 1999, 68.) Understood this way discourse analysis isn't just about analyzing rhetoric and language but language is a gate that provides insight into social reality that is constructed through language.

I consider a fundamental paradox in discourse analytic research to be the intertwining of discursive and bodily meanings. The exclusion of youth is definitely not just discursive or textual. Exclusion creates emotional and physical pain, feelings of insufficiency and repeated experiences of being turned away. Exclusion can include drugs, alcohol, homelessness, neurological diseases and mental disorders. Therefore exclusion is a very tangible experience for an individual. But cultural and societal discourses present in public media affect these concrete, tangible experiences. As social work researcher Elina Virokannas (2002) points out in her doctoral thesis on drug-addicted youth, they define themselves through the conception of what is considered as normal behavior in the society they live in. Media is an inseparable constructor of normality and abnormality.

During my research process I have thought a lot about the validity of the social constructionist theoretical background and discourse analytic methodology for my research purposes. I have been struggling between the linguistic meaning-making processes happening in the media and the very material, real consequences of exclusion for the young people. Exclusion should not be understood as just linguistic meaning-making processes and

social constructions, but the very material, concrete life-situations should at all times be kept in mind. This has also been called *weak social constructionism* as opposed to *strong social constructionism*, which again rejects the whole existence of an objective social reality (Lister 2010, 144).

Discourses are understood to have concrete material effects. According to Saraga (1998) they affect how people see themselves and themselves in regard to others. In addition they create concrete policies and strategies, which again reinforce the social construction on which they are based. (Lister 2010, 150-151.) Both the youth guarantee and the campaign “Ihan tavallisia asioita” are good examples of policies based on a social construction and then further reinforcing that construction. I have come to realize that the basis for societal change is the understanding that things are not natural, that things could be different. And here we are in the very core of social constructionism.

Before starting to write my thesis I had already been following the accelerating public debate on youth’s exclusion for years. Just for fun I had gathered interesting articles on the topic quite randomly from 2008 onwards. So when I started to gather data for my thesis I already had some idea of what I might encounter. Still I wanted not to have too strong hypotheses so that I could meet my data with fresh eyes and be open to the on-going meaning-making processes in the opinion pieces.

I have started my analysis by reading all the available data and sorting out the articles I am going to include in my research data. After having selected out the data, I read it through in a very intuitive way, pointing out various interesting bits. In this way it became clear quite fast that the same categorizations are being

repeated in the data. Already this first round of reading data is an active process of analysis and interpretations (Wood & Kroger 2000, 87). After the first rounds of reading I began to systematically thematize the articles. Some of the themes I used at this state of analysis were danger, money, activity, normality, metaphors of exclusion, responsibility and nation state. Some of them have dropped out later on in the analysis, but most of them have stuck with me. Many of the ones that have dropped out are incorporated in another discourse. On the basis of these themes I have gathered together all articles discussing a certain theme and begun to point out similarities and dissimilarities. By this time I have already had an idea of a possible discourse. However, it is by no means a natural decision, which articles or fragments discuss a certain topic (Virokannas 2004, 21). This is already an interpretative process of analysis, where the researcher is far from objective. It is also not unquestionable which of the discourses I have chosen for deeper analysis and which I am representing here. They could have been others but these are the repeated, common and frequent ones in the public debate.

I have also pointed out some commonly used conceptions, such as “normal” or “final exclusion” which came to complete the thematic analysis. However the point of discourse analysis is not just to scratch the surface of speech, but to dig in deeper in order to find out, what is being done with the speech (Virokannas 2004, 21). Therefore at this point I started to point out the power structures and subject positions created through a certain way of speaking. I also paid attention to that which is taken for granted and which is not said out loud. Digging into this level required several test rounds (*ibid.*, 22).



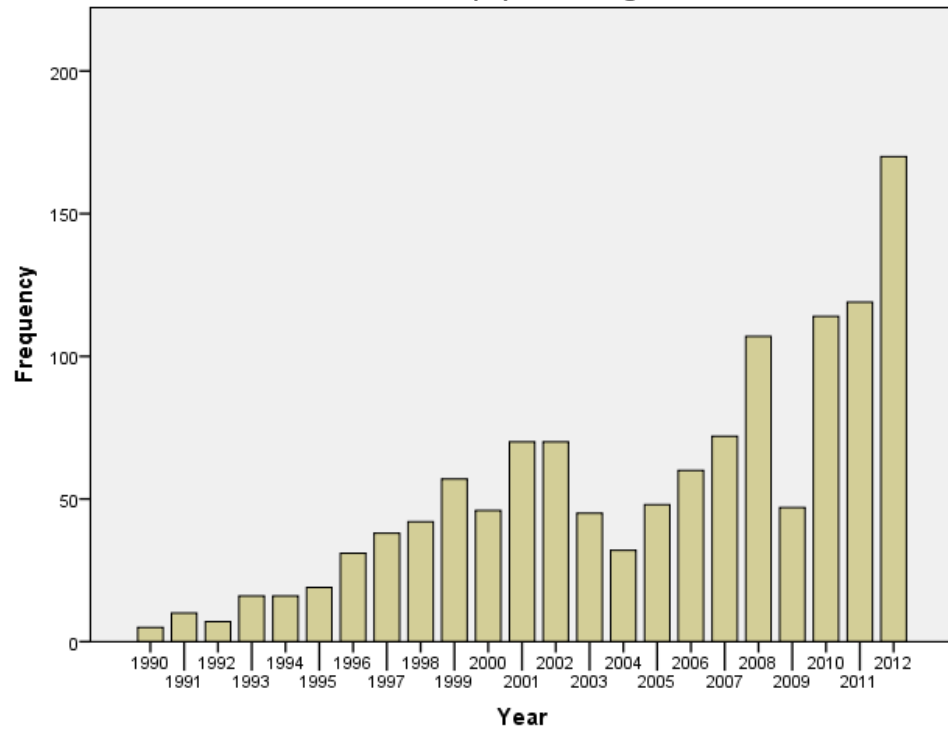
I like to see discourse analysis as a jigsaw puzzle (see also Vi-rokannas 2004, 22-23; Hacking 2009). The social construction of a certain phenomenon happens by putting the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together so that it seems natural and even. The researcher with discourse analysis as their tool finds the pieces and takes them down. In their analysis, the researcher then is able to show how a certain phenomenon is created from a certain way of putting together the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle and that they also could be put together in a different way.

### **3 MORAL PANICS AND OUTSIDERS**

#### **3.1 Moral panic<sup>iv</sup>**

Going through the archive of Helsingin Sanomat with the same entries (nuor\* AND syrjäyty\*, youth\* AND exclu\*) from year 1990 to year 2013, I soon found out that the public conversation on the exclusion of youth has exploded around year 2008. Before that an active conversation on the same topic was going on in 2001 and 2002. In the end of the 1990s youth's exclusion has been talked about in Helsingin Sanomat on average less than once in every week. It is also very interesting that during the recession years from 1990 to 1994 there was basically no debate on this topic, at least not using these particular concepts.

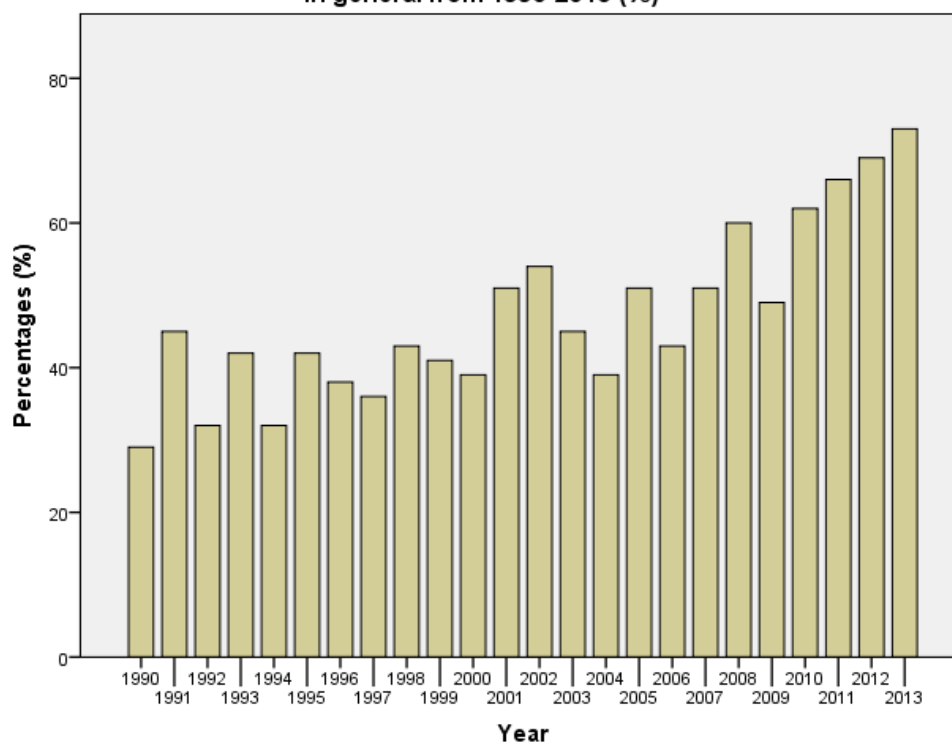
Graph 6. The frequency of hits for search word nuor\* AND syrjäyty\* from year 1990 to 2012 in the newspaper Helsingin Sanomat



Compared to the amount of unemployed youth and young people on social assistance in Finland in years 1991-2012 (graph 1.), we can see that the amount of youth is almost opposite to the amount of discussion in the media. Therefore it can be said that the exclusion of youth as a societal problem has more or less been discovered in the public media in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I think this finding in itself is an answer to my research interests. Can there be said to be a *third boom of exclusion* going on? The exclusion of youth has statistically remained as a somewhat unchanging phenomenon throughout the years whilst the public debate on the subject has accelerated. Therefore it can be argued that some sort of a *moral panic* has aroused. I will return to this idea of a possible moral panic in the very end of my analysis.

I have also done a search for search word syrjäyty\* (exclu\*) and compared this to the hits for nuor\* AND syrjäyty\* (youth\* AND exclu\*) to see the baseline for each year. From this search we can see that the exclusion of youth has always constituted a significant share of the discussion on exclusion. However, once we get to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the share of discussion on exclusion of youth grows, so that it constitutes over 50 % of all discussion on exclusion. Furthermore, once we get to year 2008, which is the beginning of my data collection, the discussion on exclusion of youth constitutes over 60 % of all discussion on exclusion, except in 2009 (49 %). This shows that even though there may have been less articles in the newspaper altogether in the beginning of the 1990s, the share of the debate on youth's exclusion has in fact grown.

**Graph 7. Share of debate articles on exclusion of youth compared to exclusion in general from 1990-2013 (%)**



From graph 7. we see that the share of debate on exclusion of youth has been mostly growing since 2008. Therefore I dare to conclude that during the 21<sup>st</sup> century and especially in the turn of the 22<sup>nd</sup> century exclusion in the public media has been defined as a phenomenon primarily attached to youth.

Simplicity seems to be everything in these opinion pieces. The complex nature of exclusion is cut down to the simplest possible solutions. Few examples from year 2012: “Military service can prevent exclusion of youth” (HS Opinions 2.9.2012). “Domestic science prevents exclusion” (HS Opinions 15.3.2012). Or “the age limit of compulsory education to 18 years” (HS Opinions 6.2.2012). Does a complex phenomenon seem more understandable when it is cut down to numbers and simple solutions? There are of course examples to the other end of a spectrum too, that try to remind of the complex nature of exclusion: “The reasons for youth’s exclusion are deep” (HS Opinions 13.9.2012) and “The phenomenon of accumulation leading to exclusion needs to be researched” (HS Opinions 29.3.2012).

The debate on exclusion of youth has also been vivid during years 2001 and 2002. Because of constrained resources I have had to limit the time frame for collecting data for this thesis. The very low amount of hits during 2009 is also interesting in between years of very intense debate on this topic.

### 3.2 The outsiders – but from where?

In order to find out, how exclusion is understood in the public debate, I began by analyzing, where youth is understood to become excluded from. It soon became clear that they are understood to become excluded from very various spaces of life – firstly, from employment or from normal life (see 2.1, 4.3 and 6 for more). Youth can also become excluded from education or from learning:

Even the most careful estimates indicate that 10-15 % of every age group are suffering from learning disabilities. [-] The worse and broader the difficulties, the bigger the risk to become excluded from learning. Self-esteem and motivation may suffer and the individual takes in a helpless attitude: school is not for them. (HS Editorials 1.4.2012.)<sup>2</sup>

Understanding that a young becomes excluded from education is in fact intertwined with the understanding that they are excluding from employment, because education should primarily lead to future employment.

Fourthly, youth can become excluded from the civil society:

The new law was seen as necessary because many immigrants are nowadays left without a job and appropriate education. From society's perspective this means that human capital is being left unused and immigrants face the danger of drifting on the edges of civil society." (HS Editorials 29.8.2011.)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> ”Oppimisvaikeuksista kärsii varovaistenkin arvioiden mukaan 10–15 prosenttia ikäluokasta. [-] Mitä pahempia ja laaja-alaisempia vaikeudet ovat, sitä suurempi on oppimisesta syrjäytymisen riski. Itsetunto ja motivaatio saattavat kärsiä, ja oppilas omaksuu avuttoman asenteen: koulu ei ole häntä varten.”

<sup>3</sup> ”[Laki kotoutumisen edistämisestä] hyväksyttiin eduskunnassa viime vuonna yksimielisesti. Sen kantava periaate on kotouttamispolitiikka, joka tukee maahanmuuttajien pääsyä suomalaisen yhteiskunnan täysivaltaisiksi jä-

This is an interesting paragraph, since it sees the lack of employment and education as reasons behind exclusion from civil society. Therefore civil society in some sense equals job and an appropriate education. The use of the verb “to drift” gives no room for agency or subjective power for the immigrants.

Fifthly, exclusion can happen *in life*, which is highlighted in the case of Anders Behring Breivik and the massacres in Norway in 2011. This is luckily and hopefully a very extreme example and consequence of exclusion: “But then there are the violent acts of people excluded in their lives. The sparks for them are anger, disappointment and the will to become famous. (HS Column 24.7.2011.)”<sup>4</sup>

The idea of exclusion in life has a strong symbolic power. Usually one’s life is excluded from somewhere but once a person becomes excluded in (or from) their own life, where do they belong. I find this to be the ultimate form of exclusion, but in today’s Finnish society, after various disastrous massacres in schools and other public places, the ultimate needs to be taken into account too.

Last, youth can be excluded from the social, the community or the outside world. Once more I would like to remind that the young themselves understand exclusion to be happening from the social and as lack of friends (Myllyniemi 2009). Therefore it is very much noteworthy that this is a very rare understanding in

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seniksi. Uutta lakia pidettiin tarpeellisena, koska monet maahanmuuttajat jäävät nykyisin vaille työtä ja tarkoituksenmukaista koulutusta. Yhteiskunnan kannalta tämä merkitsee sitä, että inhimillistä pääomaa jää käyttämättä ja maahanmuuttajat ovat vaarassa ajautua kansalaisyhteiskunnan reunalle.”

<sup>4</sup> ”Mutta sitten on elämässään syrjäytyneiden ihmisten väkivallantekoja, joiden pontimena on viha, pettymys, halu nousta kuuluisuuteen.”

my data. According to ninth-grader Niilo Harja's opinion piece (HS Opinions 17.12.2012) exclusion from the outside world can happen because does no longer go outdoors. This again can be because of excessive use of Internet and computer games or on the contrary excessive reading of books:

I think that it is good if one reads a lot, but if one withdraws completely to the world of books, it is alarming and unhealthy. Unhealthy because of lack of going outdoors. Also exclusion from the outside world and lack of social life can cause mental malaise. (HS Opinions 17.12.2012.)<sup>5</sup>

All in all, it is very essential, from where exclusion is understood to happen, as youth researchers Sami Myllyniemi, Leena Suurpää and Tommi Hoikkala emphasize in the following paragraph:

In the public debate exclusion refers to being outside the welfare system. This also goes for the new [Pekka Myrskylä's] report, where 'those young people outside education and work who do not have further education after the secondary school' are defined as excluded. It is necessary to evaluate, how these kinds of definitions are equivalent to youth's everyday knowledge about loneliness, discrimination, powerlessness and differences in the life course that do not fit the normativity of the society. (HS Opinions 10.2.2012b.)<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "Minusta on hyvä, jos lukee paljon, mutta jos sulkeutuu täysin kirjojen maailmaan, se on huolestuttavaa ja epäterveellistä. Epäterveellisen siitä tekee ulkoilun puuttuminen. Myös ulkomaailmasta syrjäytyminen ja sosiaalisen elämän puuttuminen aiheuttavat henkistä pahoinvointia."

<sup>6</sup> "Julkisessa keskustelussa syrjäytymisellä viitataan hyvinvointijärjestelmän ulkopuolella olemiseen. Niin myös tuoreessa [Pekka Myrskylän] selvityksessä, jossa syrjäytyneiksi määritellään 'sellaiset työvoiman ja opiskelun ulkopuoliset nuoret, joilla ei ole peruskoulun lisäksi muuta koulutusta'. On syytä arvioida sitä, millä tavoin tällaiset määritelmät vastaavat nuorten arki-tietoa yksinäisyydestä, syrjinnästä, vallattomuudesta tai sellaisesta elämäntilanteesta, joka ei mahdu yhteiskunnan normirajoihin."

Exclusion should not be taken for granted. Where youth is understood to become excluded from, is essential to the meaning-making processes of exclusion.

## **4 TICKETS TO FULL CITIZENSHIP**

As stated earlier, I argue that there is a certain moral panic present in the public debate on youth's exclusion. Next I am representing the following eight discourses in this moral panic:

1. The discourse of permanence
2. The discourse of normativity
3. Active citizenship A: The discourse of social dependency
4. Active citizenship B: The discourse of youth's own voice
5. The gender essentialist discourse
6. The neoliberal discourse
7. The communitarian discourse
8. The discourse of defending Finnish nation state

The first five of these discourses describe how full citizenship, according to the public debate is to be achieved and maintained. Exclusion comes out as a permanent state of affairs. It is understood primarily as a boys' problem and depending strictly to certain models of behavior interpreted as either good or bad. These models of behavior are seen as typical of one of the two essentially opposing genders. Citizenship becomes conditionalized according to normative behavior and active citizenship. Activity furthermore is primarily attached to wage-labour and attending



education. Secondly, it can be attached to possibilities for political participation.

The last three describe the moral panic and its discursive attachments. Moral panic is presented as growing concern of the Finnish nation state's, its welfare state's and its economic competitiveness's future. It is about longing for the good old times and seeing youth's exclusion as a threat to that good, which used to exist. Furthermore, responsibility is demanded from youth themselves, families and the whole community in order to combat the risk of exclusion.

#### **4.1 The discourse of permanence – there is no coming back**

The discourse of permanence gives meaning to exclusion as a stable state of affairs. It is understood as an outcome of various factors or a process, which lead to this permanent state. According to this discourse there are some criteria for this final state of exclusion, according to which one can be defined as either more or less excluded. Furthermore this discourse gives meaning to the society (or whatever the space is from which exclusion is understood to happen) as a concrete state or space outside of which it is possible to drop or be set aside. This discourse is tightly attached to *the process model of exclusion* (see 1.7).

The discourse of permanence is a discourse of various metaphors, four of which I am going to specify here. All of them, according to the debate, lead to permanent, final exclusion.

- 1) exclusion as a downward spiral
- 2) life-long exclusion
- 3) dropping out of the society

## 4) exclusion as stairs

First of all, exclusion is given meaning to as a downward spiral (syrjäytymisen kierre). Various things lead an individual to this spiral and there seems to be no way of getting out of it.

In the petty-bourgeois houses, youth may very well be lost at times, but it is fairly unlikely for them to end up in a spiral of exclusion, where they become *permanent outsiders* of employment and social affairs. (HS Opinions 19.9.2012, emphasis IH)<sup>7</sup>

In this paragraph a dichotomy is created between youth from “petty-bourgeois houses” and “permanent outsiders of employment and social affairs”. The latter is the result of a spiral of exclusion, which therefore leads to permanent or final exclusion. This is a repeated pattern of expression in my data. Final exclusion refers to exclusion as a state of affairs, where there is no coming back. In this discourse, once an individual becomes a member of the “permanently excluded”, they are there to stay – as already the word “permanent” indicates. According to my interpretation this discourse refers therefore also to lost hope and pointlessness of further efforts for this group of people.

Reference to “life-long exclusion” is another metaphor of this discourse: “Bullying may lead to life-long exclusion and depression, which can explode in a tragic way. Bullying had affected murders in both Jokela and Kauhajoki schools.” (HS Editorials 5.11.2010.)<sup>8</sup> Speaking of life-long exclusion refers to exclusion

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<sup>7</sup> ”Pikkuporvarillista elämää viettävissä kodeissa nuoret saattavat olla joskus hukassa, mutta se ei tarkoita, että he päätyisivät kovinkaan todennäköisesti syrjäytymiskierteeseen, jossa he jäävät lopullisesti työelämän ja sosiaalisten kuvioiden ulkopuolelle.”

<sup>8</sup> ”Koulukiusaamisesta saattaa seurata elinikäinen syrjäytyminen ja masennus, joka voi purkautua traagisella tavalla. Sekä Jokelan että Kauhajoen koulumurhien taustalla oli yhtenä vaikuttimena surmateot tehneiden nuorten kokema kiusaaminen.”

as a one-way street, as a permanent state that lasts for the rest of one's life.

The third way of taking part in this discourse is the idea of “dropping out of the society”. Here society can be understood as some sort of a vehicle moving at a fast pace, a cart or a rat race, from where an excluded person drops out. The discursive framework of dropping out is attached to the changes in the understanding of citizenship. Citizenship has more and more become something that people need to work for and that includes the risk of either being part of it or dropping out (Saastamoinen 2010, 230). In the same way as dropping out, exclusion can be defined as being left aside (*sivuun jääminen*) from the society:

Many young people might be happy about a less responsible work as an assistant in the beginning of their working careers. Many assistants grow up to be good professionals, if there is space for professional growth. Today way too many are dropped from the pace of work before the train has even left the platform (HS Opinions 26.1.2010.)<sup>9</sup>

Exclusion be understood as a metaphor referring precisely to an individual being an outsider from a certain space or place (Hänninen ym. 2007, 5). The important question here is what the criteria for staying in the pace of the cart or not dropping into the gulf of exclusion are.

The fourth way of understanding exclusion in this discursive framework is to define it as becoming more and more excluded. This pattern of thought is similar to understanding exclusion as stairs or alternatively as a scale: “[Researcher] Aaltola reminds

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<sup>9</sup> ”Moni nuori olisi varmasti työuran alkutaipaleella tyytyväisempi vähemmän vastuullisesta apulaisen työstä. Monesta apulaisesta kasvaa hyvä ammattilainen, mikäli ammatilliselle kasvulle annetaan tilaa. Tätä nykyä aivan liian moni putoaa työelämän kyydistä ennen kuin juna on edes lähtenyt liikkeelle.”

that shooters in Jokela and Kauhajoki were not as excluded as has been claimed” (HS Editorials 1.10.2008)<sup>10</sup>.

Here exclusion is understood as a scale where there can be found more and less exclusion. Furthermore there has to be found some criteria for positioning a person to a certain point on this scale. Another example of this understanding of exclusion as a scale or stairs is talk about “beginning to exclude” – can there really be specified a certain point where exclusion begins? Talk about the beginning of exclusion gives meaning to exclusion as a one-dimensional scale-like path. The difference between concepts marginalization and exclusion resembles the idea of exclusion as a scale or stairs. Taking steps away from the mainstream leads to marginalization and taking more steps eventually leads to exclusion (see 1.7).

This fourth pattern is not necessarily about finality but refers to an understanding of exclusion as a gradually progressive state of affairs. Altogether this fourth dimension of the discourse of finality can be found to aim at quantifying exclusion, at defining certain criteria for a certain stage of exclusion.

Very little room in the debate is left for that exclusion in itself is pretty much impossible to measure. However youth researcher Sami Myllyniemi (HS Opinions 27.3.2008) reminds about the difficulties in measuring exclusion and of the various indicators there are for trying to fulfill this mission. He also points out the

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<sup>10</sup> ”[Akatemiatutkija] Aaltola muistutti, että Jokelan ja Kauhajoen tekijät eivät olleet niin syrjäytyneitä kuin väitetään.”

rapid changes in youth's life situations. This is a marginal counter-discourse, since most of the data understands exclusion as an easily measurable, easily definable point of stagnation.

The discourse of permanence is attached to the characteristics of exclusion as a paradox (see 1.6). Tuula Helne (2002, 8) describes exclusion as a concept that usually ends up describing the result and stagnation, instead of a process. Exclusion comes out as a one-way street, and once an individual is in the category of excluded, there seems to be no coming back. Exclusion starts to stand for end of all movement and changing of direction seems unlikely. Therefore I interpret the frequency of the discourse of permanence to be attached to the paradoxical nature of exclusion as a concept – though it is a relational concept, it comes out as perceiving naturality in the public media debate.

## 4.2 Active, passive and in between

Active citizenship is in the center of political debate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – it is reiterated in many programs, political agendas and laws dealing with youth and their exclusion. Both the youth law (1.1 §) and Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen's government platform's child- and youth policy (2011, 37) declare that they should support the active citizenship of youth. The youth guarantee talks about supporting youth's possibilities to function as active citizens and is concerned about "long phases without any activities" and youth "drifting outside any activities" (The Ministry of Employment and Education 2012, 7). What is this so often repeated and emphasized *activity*?

In the 1980s and earlier, in the time of full employment, active people were those up to a lot – hobbies and voluntary work for instance. Therefore activity was located in people's free time. Later on in the 1990s it became defined by both wage-labour, civil activities and taking care of oneself. (Julkunen 1998a, 182.) The important question is what active citizenship now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is. And in the context of my thesis more specifically, how is it defined in the public debate in Finland?

I have pointed out two distinctive discourses of active citizenship in today's public debate on youth's exclusion. The first one of the discourses is highly normative seeing activity mainly through its opposite passivity. It is trying to combat social dependency by activation. In this discourse activity is seen as normal behavior and passivity sometimes very value-laden as hanging around, smoking pot and eating crisps on the sofa. In this discourse the solution to youth's exclusion is found through wage-labour, education and active labour market policies. The second discourse is emphasizing youth's activity as political actors, the need to hear youth's own voice in political and public debate and their activity as producers of their own free time. This discourse is connected to another focal point in pursuing activations, which is trying to combat exclusion, promote human dignity and inclusion in some important societal arenas. Last I am visiting some of the power structures and subject positions present in this discourse to shed more light in the activity, passivity and their paradoxality.

#### 4.2.1 The discourse against social dependency – eating crisps on the sofa

Activity can be seen as a concept defending normative ways of organizing one's life and resisting *social dependency*. In this sense the concept emphasizes hard work to make a living, autonomy, responsibility and morality (Julkunen 2006, 144). Raija Julkunen (ibid., 206) has declared that the basic ideology of citizenship has in fact been reformulated these ideas in mind. In this sense activity is a normative concept, defining what kind of behavior is suitable and what kind isn't.

In the debate in public media active citizenship represents a ticket to full citizenship. Active citizenship and activity are being repeated over and over again without it requiring any kind of further explanations. Discourse analysis turns out to be particularly useful with such a concept that is very much taken for granted as it seeks to pay attention to the self-evident. Finland's National Coalition Party's Member of the Parliament Jaana Pelkonen writes about those young people, who could work but just do not bother to "raise a finger".

Another troubling group are the young who are healthy and functional but have taken it to be the society's responsibility to support them without raising a finger themselves. These young on social benefits let the working people who are paying their taxes that is also the other hard-working and hard-trying young people, support them. [-] it is too tempting for these young to remain passive receivers of social welfare. [-] Idleness in a critical state of life does not do good to anyone, but increases the risk to become excluded. (HS Opinions 16.2.2012.)<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> ”huolestuttava joukko ovat ne nuoret, jotka ovat terveitä ja työkykyisiä, mutta ovat katsoneet yhteiskunnan velvollisuudeksi elättää heidät panematta itse tikkua ristiin. Nämä toimeentulotuella elävät nuoret antavat työssäkäyvien veronmaksajien, myös muiden ahkerasti yrittävien nuorten, elättää

This paragraph represents the highly troubling nature of passivity and abuse of social benefits according to this discourse. It creates a strong dichotomy between the hard-working, hard-trying people paying their taxes and the irresponsible, unmoral, not empathetic, easily exposed to temptations, idle young people. Idleness represents a threat that further increases the risk to become excluded. I am representing this Jaana Pelkonen's opinion piece here first, since it contains many of the typical features of the discourse against social dependency: a harsh dichotomy between active and passive, hard-working and those not raising a finger. It represents abuse of the society and the welfare state, the troublesome and even fateful nature of idleness and the in-built unwillingness of people not to work, if given the chance to abuse society and the hard-working tax-payers.

Unemployment in this discourse is given meaning to as undesirable dependency from the welfare state. Active labour market policy is attached to the idea that an unemployed would rather not work if there were no sanctions. However, research has shown that most of the unemployed would actually like to work (f. ex. Karjalainen & Moisio 2010). In Dean and Taylor-Gooby's research (1992, 91) only one sixth of their informants, who were all on social benefits, was not particularly interested in finding a job in the nearby future and about 75 % of these people had a disease or caring responsibilities.

Staff writer Juha Akkanen (HS Editorials 1.11.2010) talks about the troubling nature of basic income, since "it is possible that people perfectly capable of working would live on it just out of

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itsensä. [--] on houkutus jäädä passiiviseksi toimeentulotuen vastaanottajaksi näiden nuorten kohdalla liian suuri. [--] Joutilaisuus kriittisessä vaiheessa elämää ei tee kenellekään hyvää, vaan lisää syrjäytymisriskiä."



sheer unwillingness to take up crappy jobs”<sup>12</sup>. Here people are given meaning to as possibly lazy, picky and abusive of the welfare system. It also assumes that given the possibility people will rather not work.

Activity’s dichotomous opposite in my data is passivity. Idleness is seen as an almost pathological state of mind with highly troubling consequences. It is a state of deep irresponsibility with lack of respect for descent Finnish tax-payers, the welfare state and Finland’s future. Idleness receives quite colorful meanings, such as “it is unlikely for [the young] to have second thoughts when *hanging about*” (HS Editorials 24.1.2008, emphasis IH)<sup>13</sup>. *Hanging about* is a colorful expression pointing out the meaninglessness of the person’s way of spending their time. *Hanging about* does not have a goal and it is a fairly degrading way to describe one’s habits of spending their free time.

Staff writer Antti Blåfield (HS Editorials 3.4.2011) states that something needs to be actively done about youth unemployment. Meeting the young once in two weeks (by social officers) would help, according to him, so that the young don’t so easily fall into “an apathy of doing nothing”<sup>14</sup>. Here an unemployed young is implicitly understood to have nothing else to do than to either meet the social officers or fall into “the apathy of doing nothing”.

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<sup>12</sup> ”kansalaispalkkaa saattaisivat nostaa myös täysin työkuntoiset ihmiset, joita ei vain huvita ottaa vastaan ’paskaduunia’”

<sup>13</sup> ”ei [nuori] todennäköisesti *vapaana hilluessaan* itse tullut toisiin ajatuksiin.”

<sup>14</sup> ”vajoa toimettomuuden apatiaan”

Activity may receive very specific meanings, as in the following opinion piece by fraternity teacher Jaakko Väisänen from Joensuu:

For a Windows Live Messenger –young consuming crisps on a sofa, to get interested in their school’s indoor air, the black economy or to take a stance on school’s procurements does not happen by itself. In order to grow to become an active citizen, a young needs grown-ups and encouraging peer groups.” (HS Opinions 3.1.2008.)<sup>15</sup>

In this quotation active citizenship is understood as being interested in one’s school’s activities and the black economy. The opposite is a young spending time in a live chat called Windows Live Messenger and eating crisps on the sofa. Here again a very strong dichotomy between the active and passive youth is created. This is also not the only paragraph where *the sofa* becomes an interesting entity in the meaning-making process of active citizenship.

The sofa seems to symbolize a place for passivity, complete unproductivity and some sort of ultimate exclusion. Military doctor Juha T. Laine (HS Opinions 14.7.2012) explains the dangers of young people dropping out of the military service. What happens if the young isn’t *even* accepted to the military? “Instead of work or education [a young] can concentrate on smoking pot and staring at the shopping channel”<sup>16</sup>, he writes. Here smoking pot and staring at the shopping channel are introduced as opposites of

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<sup>15</sup> ”Se, että sohvilla sipsejä kuluttava mese-nuori kiinnostuisi oman koulunsa sisäilmasta, harmaasta taloudesta tai ottaisi kantaa koulun hankintoihin, ei tapahdu itsestään. Kasvu aktiiviseksi kansalaiseksi tarvitsee sekä aikuisia arvo-vaikuttajia että kannustavia vertaisryhmiä.”

<sup>16</sup> ”Opiskelun tai työn asemesta voi keskittyä pössyttelemään pilveä ja tuijottamaan ostoskanavaa.”

working or going to school. The sofa is not mentioned, but staring at the shopping channel is most likely an activity happening on the sofa.

The article goes on: “It is a completely different thing to be sometimes under the influence of a legal or an illegal drug than to booze, smoke or fix without a day rhythm” (HS Opinions 14.7.2012)<sup>17</sup>. Here a dichotomy is created between proper and improper use of drugs – the important factors in determining whether drug use is okay or not is the presence of a day rhythm and whether one is doing it sometimes or more often. This passage points out the discursive meaning-making process of when the use of drugs becomes a problem and leads to exclusion.

Excluded youth’s life is defined for example as “wasting a year on their way to a long career” and as “lazing around” (HS Opinions 19.6.2010). Further it is defined as “lying unemployed” (HS Opinions 9.3.2011), “resting at home” (HS Opinions 23.4.2011), or being left “empty handed to mature” (HS Opinions 24.6.2010). All these phrases refer to not doing anything and to lazing around. Simply put, they define youth as passive. Work and education therefore receive strong meanings as *the* doing in life, without which life is just about lazing, wasting time and lying around.

Law student Kasper Korpelainen is concerned about Finland’s future as the cradle of welfare:

Since little children, Finns have heard that being born here is like winning in lottery. However, the happiness created by winning does not last forever. It is time to dis-

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<sup>17</sup> ”On aivan eri asia olla joskus päihtynyt laillisen tai laittoman päihteen vaikutuksesta kuin juopotella, poltella tai piikitellä ilman vuorokausirytmää.

cuss how we might reserve Finland's position as the cradle of welfare. In order to do this, the current system needs to be shaken. Social security should be sufficient to those in real need, the others should be activated. (HS Opinions 8.8.2013.)<sup>18</sup>

Here we may encounter a dichotomy between those in real need and those not. Those considered not in real need should be activated. This idea creates a two-layered social security system and is based on an idea of deserving (in real need) and undeserving (not in real need) poor. What the conditions for real need are, is not specified in this opinion piece. In another opinion piece Finland's National Coalition Party's Member of the Parliament Jaana Pelkonen proposes an incentive bonus (*kannustinraha*) for the active young people.

When it comes to these young, can we afford to settle for the easy solution that their role in the society is *just a person on social security benefits*? Why don't we even want to try and encourage them to take part in running the society? I find this to be most of all undermining of these young and we can't afford it today. (HS Opinions 22.3.2011, emphasis IH.)<sup>19</sup>

In this paragraph Pelkonen defines the youth as *mere* people on social benefits. Being just that refers to them having failed as citizens or as people. "Could have this young been something else?" the writer asks. Becoming defined as *merely* someone on

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<sup>18</sup> "Suomalaisille on hoettu pienestä pitäen, kuinka tänne syntyminen on lottovoitto. Lottovoiton onnea ei kuitenkaan riitä ikuisuuksiin. On aika keskustella siitä, kuinka Suomen asema hyvinvoinnin kehtona voidaan säilyttää. Tähän tarvitaan nykyisen systeemin ravistelua. Tukea pitäisi jakaa riittävästi sitä oikeasti tarvitseville, muu väestö pitää aktivoida."

<sup>19</sup> "Onko meillä varaa tyytyä näiden nuorten kohdalla siihen helppoon ratkaisuun, että heidän 'yhteiskunnallinen roolinsa' on pelkkä tuensaaja? Miksi emme edes halua yrittää kannustaa heitä osallistumaan yhteiskunnan pyörittämiseen? Mielestäni tämä on ennen kaikkea näiden nuorten todellista aliarvioimista, johon meillä ei tänä päivänä ole varaa."

social benefits implies that you are lacking something or that you are not quite enough of a citizen.

A counter-discourse can also be pointed out in my data, especially in the debate of the reform of income support law (*laki toimeentulotuesta* 1412/1997) 10.1 § 1 k. and 10.3 § 2 k. Behind the reform can be found an implicit idea of the passivizing feature of social income and the unwillingness of the service user to go to school or work unless they're financially forced to do so. According to this reform, the only proper form of active citizenship is attendance to wage-labour or education.

This counter-discourse to the discourse of social dependency highlights the troublesome effects of this cutting down for its tendency to punish those already in the very most difficult positions. Therefore it resigns from the understanding of those people on social benefits as passive, idle and to-be-activated. Doctor of Psychology Tapio Klen criticizes this reform as follows:

Even before final exclusion the young [-] have often ended up in a state of learned helplessness. [-] If even the benefits are cut from a person already in a state of learned helplessness, it leads to even greater helplessness and passivity. You can be sure that the young will not try anymore. The predisposition for criminality will grow. Cutting down benefits seals down the helplessness and exclusion. (HS Opinions 16.1.2011.)<sup>20</sup>

This is a two-dimensional paragraph. Firstly it criticizes the cutting down of benefits, therefore resigning from the discourse of social dependency. Secondly, however, it defines the young as

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<sup>20</sup> ”Jo ennen lopullista syrjäytymistä nuori [-] on usein joutunut niin kutsutun opitun avuttomuuden tilaan. [-] Jos opitun avuttomuuden tilaan joutu-neilta vähennetään vielä taloudellisia tukia, johtaa se entistä suurempaan avuttomuuteen ja passiivisuuteen. Tällöin nuori ei taatusti yritä enää mitään. Alttius rikoksiin kyllä kasvaa. Tukien supistaminen ikään kuin antaa sinetin opitulle avuttomuudelle ja syrjäytymiselle.”

passive and helpless objects. It also sees exclusion as a final state of mind with a seal (“even before final exclusion”, “cutting down benefits *seals* down helplessness and exclusion”) therefore taking part in the discourse of permanence as well (see 4.1).

The important question in the context of active citizenship is, in which arenas of life inclusion should be supported in order to combat exclusion. Is it the labour market? Is it the right to citizenship even without attendance in wage-labour? In one’s free time? In nurture? Or should the important arenas for activity be defined individually? Is taking care of one’s own everyday life enough, if it is all that the person can do? (Julkunen 1998a.)

Granted that there is the counter-discourse present in the public debate, the discourse against social dependency is one-dimensional. It leaves almost no room for wandering. In my data activity that is not attached to wage-labour or education is given meaning to as apathy or hanging about – idleness is seen as irresponsibility, dependency from the welfare state and as a threat. Therefore it is given meaning to as ambitionless and activity with no aims whatsoever. This leaves out various kinds of forms of active behavior happening outside of the labour market. Therefore active citizenship is giving meaning to desirable and undesirable, active and passive behavior. The construction of exclusion is happening all the time through bipolar dichotomies.

Active citizenship is tightly linked to active labour market policies and the demand to *activate* the youth. Tuukka Lahti (2006, 195) defines active labour market policies as increasing elements encouraging people towards self-directedness in social security and social services. Matilda Wrede-Jäntti (2010) has researched

unemployed youth. She points out that active labour market policies is defining how a young should behave and act in their life. According to her, this proper action is working or attending education.

Markku Hassinen and Tuomas Leinonen write about the costs of unemployment: “Municipalities pay every year over one hundred millions to the state, because they cannot activate or provide employment to people that have been unemployed over 500 days” (HS Editorials 5.3.2009).<sup>21</sup> The whole opinion piece creates a dichotomy between active and passive.

Social employment's and workshops' efficacy and cost-efficiency are often evaluated on inadequate grounds. Usually this is because only one functional space and its costs are represented to the decision-makers. But there are two possible functional spaces: either active or passive. In the active space the beginning exclusion is tried to inhibit by action – such as workshops. In the passive space people's income and basic needs are secured but they are assumed to take care of their capabilities on the labour market and other support they may need, by themselves. Either one of these spaces always exists. It is for the society to choose, which one. (HS Editorials 5.3.2009.)<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> ”Kunnat maksavat vuosittain valtiolle yli sata miljoonaa euroa siitä, että ne eivät kykene järjestään yli 500 päivää työttömänä olleiden aktivoimista ja työllistämistä.”

<sup>22</sup> ”Sosiaalisen työllistämisen ja etenkin työpajatoiminnan tuloksellisuutta ja kustannustehokkuutta arvioidaan usein vajavaisin perustein. Tämä johtuu yleensä siitä, että päättäjille esitetään vain yksi toiminnallinen tilanne ja sen aiheuttamat kustannukset. Näitä mahdollisia toiminnallisia tiloja on kuitenkin kaksi: joko aktiivinen tai passiivinen. Aktiivisessa tilassa pyritään toiminnalla - esimerkiksi työpajoilla - estämään alkavaa syrjäytymistä tai poistamaan syrjäytymisen jo aiheuttamia haittoja. Passiivisessa tilassa turvataan ihmisten toimeentuloa ja perustarpeita, mutta heidän odotetaan itse huolehtivan työmarkkinavalmiudestaan ja muusta tarvitsemastaan tuesta. Jompikumpi tila on aina voimassa. Yhteiskunnan valinta viime kädessä ratkaisee, kumpi se on.”

Passivity (passively receiving social welfare) is understood as not hoped-for, as “storing people”. Activity (employment or for example workshops organized by employment offices) is seen as something to be desired. However the active space also contains some support and help people may need – at least in order to become more compatible for the labour market.

In February 2012 Finland’s National Coalition Party’s Member of the Parliament Jaana Pelkonen wanted to see the youth guarantee reach all young people, except:

I think that no money free of charge should be given to healthy and functional young, but they should be obliged to attend some activating measures. It is not right in any circumstance that some opt out on purpose to become passive recipients of social benefits when others need to work twice as hard. (HS Opinions 16.2.2012.)<sup>23</sup>

Through this paragraph we can see how the demand for active labour market policies is tightly linked to the fight against social dependency. Behind this paragraph is a strong presupposition about the abuse of social benefits. The basis of active labour market policies is here defined as moral – there are people on social benefits on other citizens’ expense and just out of pure laziness. The prerequisite for citizenship rights (adequate income) is “obligation to attend some activating measures”. Therefore citizenship rights become conditional on the adequate fulfillment of citizenship obligations. It is not further explained what these “activating measures” are.

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<sup>23</sup> ”Mielestäni terveille ja toimintakykyisille nuorille ei tulisi antaa vastikkeetonta rahaa lainkaan, vaan heidät tulisi velvoittaa johonkin aktivointitoimintateeseen. Ei ole missään tilanteessa oikein, että osa jättäytyy tahallaan passiiviseksi tukien nauttijaksi osan joutuessa tekemään töitä kaksin verroin enemmän.”



Tapani Sihvola (HS Opinions 21.10.2012) on the other hand points out the ineffectiveness of active labour market policies in activating youth and promulgates it as disciplining people. Instead he proposes basic income as the solution to exclusion. This chapter has captured the attachment between activation and active citizenship and active labour market policies. Activation is oftentimes attached to wage-labour and employment – in conclusion, anything but social dependency. What else could it be? Next I am turning to the other discourse of active citizenship – the discourse of youth's own voice.

#### 4.2.2 The discourse of youth's own voice

Activity can also be seen as emphasizing youth's own voice and its necessity to be heard in the public debate. It needs to be pointed out that this discourse is way less frequent than the discourse against social dependency. The opinion pieces point out that solutions to unemployment of youth should be asked from the young themselves (HS Opinions 7.3.2012; HS Opinions 30.1.2010) or that youth's own understanding of exclusion should be taken into account when trying to understand exclusion (HS Opinions 29.3.2012) (see also chapter 4.2.3).

Some opinion pieces point out the importance of youth's political activity, not just activity through wage-labour and attending education. Staff writer Jouni Välijärvi (HS Editorials 31.10.2011) asks, to what extent does the Finnish school system produce passive attitude towards information and the society. He points out that youth's will to effect on society's development in Finland is weak. Here passivity refers to youth's ability to let their voices be heard, to affect politically:

The problem in the Finnish school is that despite of know-how youth's trust in their own abilities, attitudes towards learning new things and especially the will to affect actively to the development of the society are weak. The danger is that high-quality know-how does not develop into societal action and work creating new things. It is worth asking how much the pedagogy and culture in schools today produce passive attitudes towards information and the society. (HS Editorials 31.10.2011.)<sup>24</sup>

Master of Pedagogic Kristiina Alppivuori's opinion piece promotes the importance of being able to effect on the local level, in neighborhoods (HS Opinions 21.10.2011). Political activity, effecting at the very grassroots level and promoting the importance of hearing youth's own voice all point out another kind of understanding of active citizenship. It is a form of activity that isn't attached only to citizenship through wage-labour and education.

Youth researchers Leena Suurpää and Veronika Honkasalo (HS Editorials 17.7.2009) ask, how open the Finnish civil society in fact is.

Who can become a part of it and who are left aside? On what conditions do people from different cultural backgrounds become active developers of the civil society – that they're not just receiving help and causing concern?<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> ”Suomalaisen koulun erityisongelma on se, että tiedoista ja taidoista huolimatta nuorten luottamus omaan osaamiseensa, asenne uuden oppimiseen sekä erityisesti halukkuus vaikuttaa aktiivisesti yhteiskunnan kehitykseen ovat heikkoja. Vaarana on, ettei laadukas tietojenhallinta kehity uutta luovaksi työksi ja yhteiskunnalliseksi toiminnaksi. On syytä kysyä, missä määrin koulun nykyinen pedagogiikka ja toimintakulttuuri tuottavat passiivista asennetta tietoon ja yhteiskuntaan.”

<sup>25</sup> ”Keille kansalaistoiminnan portit aukeavat, ja ketkä jäävät ulkopuolelle? Millä ehdoilla erilaisista kulttuuritaustoista tulevat pääsevät mukaan kansalaisyhteiskunnan aktiivisiksi kehittäjiksi – eivät ainoastaan avunsaajiksi tai huolen aiheiksi?”

Here active participation in the development of the civil society is the basis for active citizenship – the opposite of which is “*just* receiving help and causing worry”. This again refers to passivity and social dependency as troubling phenomena.

Youth’s free time activities can also be understood as active and meaningful, but only when they are the certain kind. “Internet has remodeled youth culture by opening up possibilities for new kind of involvement, conversation and exchanging information. Instead of *passive consuming* youth share, apply and produce media content for themselves and others. The use of media is communal and participatory.” (HS Editorials 12.7.2008, emphasis IH.)<sup>26</sup> In this paragraph “passive consuming” is seen as a secondary form of spending time on the Internet. Active sharing, applying and producing media content therefore are understood as something to strive for, something valuable and better. An order of supremacy is created between these two – the one not so good and the one to strive for.

A bipolar dichotomy is constructed in my data between the successful, active, social youth with healthy lifestyles. These youth exercise, are normal weight and score good grades. Then there’s the youth that do not exercise, are overweight and become excluded. They don’t do so well in school and have unhealthy lifestyles. (HS Editorials 31.3.2008; HS Editorials 21.8.2008). Exercising is a way to active citizenship and good way to spend one’s free time. Whereas watching television, spending time on the computer or “hanging about with friends” are something inferior. They may even lead to using drugs and diminished control

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<sup>26</sup> ”Internet on muokannut nuorisokulttuuria avaamalla mahdollisuuden uudella osallistumisella, keskustelulla ja tietojen vaihdolla. Passiivisen kuluttamisen sijasta nuoret jakavat, soveltavat ja tuottavat mediasisältöä itselleen ja toisilleen. Median käyttäminen on yhteisöllistä ja osallistuvaa.”

over one's own life (HS Opinions 15.1.2011.) This understanding is supported by the gate theory, according to which smoking cigarettes leads to drinking beer, which leads to stronger alcoholic beverages, smoking cannabis and eventually fixing drugs.

Pseudonym "Mutsi" ("Mum") tells about her 21-year-old son's ways of spending his free time.

[The excluded youth] live fairly active lives. They sit around at each other's places, play around in bands, hang about at flea markets, attend Internet conversations, read newspapers and drink cheap beer at local pubs. They are fairly normal young people that see problems in the surrounding society. They are for instance rebellious towards the over-productive middle-class." (HS Opinions 10.2.2012a.)<sup>27</sup>

This paragraph creates an understanding of activities with no objectives whatsoever: sitting around, playing about, hanging about and drinking cheap beer for example. She refers to the youth's lives as "fairly active" and to them as "fairly normal young people". But on the other hand it gives meaning to the young as thinking, seeing, understanding and able to be rebellious. The various discourses with various meanings seem to be overlapping quite effectively in my data.

According to this discourse the young can be seen as active not just by being socially independent, but as active in their free time, active participators in political decision-making processes and being capable of affecting the understanding of youth's exclusion. But this discourse can also include a moral side tone,

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<sup>27</sup> "Nämä nuoret elävät melko aktiivista elämää. He istuskelevat toistensa kämpillä, soittelevat bändeissä, luuhaavat kirpputoreilla, osallistuvat nettikeskusteluihin, lukevat lehtiä ja juovat halpaa olutta lähikuppilassa. He ovat melko normaaleja nuoria, jotka näkevät ympäröivän yhteiskunnan ongelmia. Heidän elämäänsä kytkeytyy muun muassa kapina ylisuorittavaa keskiluokkaa kohtaan."

when it is pointed out that the young should be spending their free time in a proper way – exercising mostly and not hanging about with friends.

Especially typical of boys according to my data is the problematic use of Internet. It is also a community that has received extra attention after the school shootings and the massacres in Norway. In most of the cases the murderers have found a like-minded community from the Internet. In my data the Internet receives an almost almighty subject position able to pull the young all the way to the bottom of exclusion. The Internet and computers have been part of our everyday lives only from somewhere around the middle of the 1990s. Because of this they are a new, somewhat unknown phenomenon, especially strange to the older generations. My data verifies a vivid picture of an excluded young, usually a boy, that spends whole nights in the dark world of the Internet and playing video games.

Professor emeritus Pekka Pihlamo (HS Opinions 16.6.2010) is worried about the modern youth's freer and easier life. In his article the Internet is given meaning to as almost a temptress-like free-time activity:

Decades ago the youth did not have hobbies tempting to short-sightedness, like today. Such as the Internet with its games and oftentimes whole-time 'partying'. [-] At the same time homes let go of their children too soon and the young is more 'raised' by their peers than their parents. Unless the peers' example encourages kids to patience, it is even easier to slip away to the world of games and other activities providing temporary pleasure.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> ”Vuosikymmeniä sitten nuorisolla ei ollut nykyisen kaltaisia lyhytjänteisyyteen houkuttelevia harrastuksia, kuten esimerkiksi internetiä peleineen ja usein päätoimiselta vaikuttavaa 'bailausta'. [-] Samalla kotien ote nuorista on usein kirvonnut liian varhain, ja nuori on enemmänkin tovereiden kuin vanhempien 'kasvatettavana'. Ellei toveripiirin esimerkki satu kannustamaan

In this paragraph the longing for the good old times, typical of the communitarian discourse (see 5.2), is visible. Decades ago things were better, parents raised their children and the Internet did not tempt children to the world of temporary pleasure. Games create a whole different world, therefore somehow separate from the rest of the world.

Oftentimes the Internet is given meaning to as separate from real life: “Through the Internet two shy young people can find each other, which would not necessarily happen in real life” (HS Opinions 18.1.2009)<sup>29</sup>. This refers to Internet as a separate reality, a universe that is not *real*, that is even imaginary.

Finnish teacher Noora Koski (HS Opinions 26.4.2011) is worried about young people not doing their homework. “A chapter of its own are the young playing computer games all night long. For them it is a huge step to even go to school in the morning. Someone should put them their foot down.”<sup>30</sup> I interpret this to refer to irresponsible parents not being able to control their children’s use of the computer, unable to “put their foot down”.

On the other hand it can also be the parents that are too into their computer and therefore not being able to raise their children properly. Pseudonym “Believer” writes about their inability to trust their parents. Their parents aren’t interested in the lives of their children and don’t even ask how they’re doing. “If I try and

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nuorta pitkäjänteisyyteen, hänen on entistä helpompi luiskahtaa pelien ja muun ajanvietteen hetkellistä tyydytystä tuottavaan maailmaan.”

<sup>29</sup> ”Netin välityksellä voi siis kaksi ujoa nuorta löytää toisensa, mitä ei välttämättä tosielämässä voisi tapahtua.”

<sup>30</sup> ”Oma lukunsa ovat yökaudet tietokonepelejä pelaavat nuoret. Heille on iso askel päästä edes aamulla kouluun. Soisi, että joku löisi heille nyrkin pöytään.”

tell about this, they seem to be more interested in the computer in front of them” (HS Opinions 19.11.2012)<sup>31</sup>. Here the computer is coming in the way of family’s communication and in the first paragraph even in the way of real life.

Child’s best interest is a highly criticized concept because arguing by child’s best interest refers to some instance defining the interest from top to bottom without necessarily hearing the child themselves. This definition from top to bottom is especially present in Jaana Pelkonen’s opinion piece. She argues that social workers should be obliged to meet all young people on social benefits. She refers to social worker’s ability to diminish the level of social income 20-40 % if a young does not take a place in education or work when offered. “Unfortunately [this] is not enough to progress a model where active interference would work for the young’s own best” (HS Opinions 1.2.2013)<sup>32</sup>. Here the “young’s own best” is attached to the legal level and the power of the social worker. It implies that these instances know better what’s best for the young than the young themselves.

Child’s best interest does not have to be referred to in such a demeaning manner: “Schools and classes need more responsible adults taking part in encountering the children, sharing their experiences and knowledge together aiming at the child’s best interest” (HS Opinions 11.2.2012)<sup>33</sup>. Here the *responsible adults* are aiming at the child’s best interest – that is they’re trying to

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<sup>31</sup> ”Jos itse alan kertoa tästä, he näyttävät olevan enemmän kiinnostuneita tietokoneesta, joka heidän edessään on.”

<sup>32</sup> ”Valitettavasti [tämä ei] kuitenkaan riittävästi edistä mallia, jossa aktiivinen puuttuminen toimisi nuoren itsensä parhaaksi.”

<sup>33</sup> ”Kouluissa ja luokissa tarvitaan lisää lasten kohtaamiseen osallistuvia vastuullisia aikuisia, jotka jakavat yhdessä kokemuksiaan ja osaamistaan tavoitteenaan lapsen etu”

think what would be best for the child, without necessarily knowing.

All in all it is noteworthy that the discourse of youth's voice is by and large maintained by researchers in sociology and youth studies, such as Veronika Honkasalo, Leena Suurpää, Tommi Hoikkala and Sami Myllyniemi. This discourse understands active citizenship as combating exclusion, promoting human dignity and inclusion in the reasonable arenas of life.

#### 4.2.3 Subject positions and power structures

It is important to find out, who is speaking in the public debate on youth's exclusion and who have the loudest voices. What is the right to know in a certain subject position and who has the right to express their voice in the debate? What kinds of power structures are attached to a certain subject position? (Charpentier 2001, 72.)

The young are oftentimes seen as passive objects of various measures conducted by adults. It turns out that both the speakers and the audience of the discourse are mostly adults.

Unless we as today's politicians making decisions and representatives of the private sector are able to encourage the young to work and to offer them work, how do we imagine them to understand that only by working we can remain as a welfare state and reserve our high standard of living? (HS Opinions 25.3.2012.)<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> ”Ellemme me tämän päivän päätöksiä tekevinä poliitikkoina ja yksityisen sektorin edustajina kykene kannustamaan nuoria töihin ja tarjoamaan heille töitä, miten kuvittelemme heidän ymmärtävän, että vain tekemällä töitä voimme pysyä hyvinvointivaltiona ja säilyttää korkean elintasomme?”



Here it is explicitly highlighted that *the we* of the opinion piece are not any citizens whatsoever, but politicians and representatives of the private sector. The *them* therefore are the young. Who then is *the we* that is remaining as a welfare state and having responsibility for the high standard of living? It depends on the understanding that the young have – the understanding that only by working we can remain as a welfare state. Securing this understanding is dependent on the politicians and representatives of the private sector. Paradoxically the opinion piece positions power to the adults up until the point where it shifts the future of the welfare state and the nation state on the shoulders’ of the young.

*The we* according to my data are in general adults, even if it would be highlighted that the youth’s voice should be heard more in the debate. Four differing ways of using power can be itemized from my data. Adults can first of all either *help* or *support* youth on their way to active citizenship. Riikka Lonka writes about the military service sending the most in need straight home: “The young is very likely to throw in the towel; let it be then, when I’m no good. Going home is very close. Who is going to help and support the young at home? Probably no one.” (HS Opinions 2.9.2012.)<sup>35</sup> This articulation (help, support) still leaves room to the subjectivity of youth themselves. Unfortunately it quite often appears as doubting questions – who is going to help?

Secondly, adults can *interfere* or even *lead*: “Leading youth to the beginning of their lives is always going to cover the costs

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<sup>35</sup> ”Tällaisella käytännöllä nuori heittää helposti pyyhkeen kehään; antaa olla, kun en kelpaa. Kotiinlähtö on herkässä. Kuka auttaa ja tukee nuorta kotona? Ei todennäköisesti kukaan.”

many times over” (HS Editorials 26.8.2011)<sup>36</sup>. Here youth is already much more passive in the hands of adults’ leading and other actions. Thirdly youth can be activated. The verb *activate* creates youth as passive objects of actions conducted by either adults’ or welfare institutions. Activation often seems to be forcing in a guise of free choice or guarantee. Fourthly youth can be *forced* or *obliged*. Here youth have basically no subject-position of their own: “I think that no money free of charge should be given to healthy and functional young, but they should be *obliged* to attend some activating measures” (HS Opinions 16.2.2012, emphasis IH)<sup>37</sup>.

All these abovementioned ways of affecting youth’s exclusion are forms of using power. They define who has power, who can use it and who is the object of these power structures. But according to the foucauldian idea, power is rather a network than functioning one-way. Therefore it is worth mentioning that agency is in-built in governance and power structures. There would be no governance or power if there were no somewhat free, autonomous individuals. Therefore the object of power structures has the ability to think and so they may counter-think the situation. (Dean 1999, 14–15.) “[T]he one governed is, at least in some rudimentary sense, an actor and therefore a locus of freedom” (ibid., 13). Wherever there’s power, there’s also the possibility of counteraction.

In general, the active citizenship promoted by my data, through two discourses of active citizenship, is very contradictory. On

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<sup>36</sup> ”Nuoren taluttaminen itsenäisen elämän alkuun maksaa aina kustannukset moninkertaisina takaisin.”

<sup>37</sup> ”Mielestäni terveille ja toimintakykyisille nuorille ei tulisi antaa vastikkeetonta rahaa lainkaan, vaan heidät tulisi *velvoittaa* johonkin aktiivitoimenpiteeseen.”

the one hand it explicitly talks about the demand for youth's activity. On the other hand it creates the young as passive objects of various measures conducted by various adults.

### **4.3 The discourse of normativity – hanging out at the mall**

The discourse of normativity is about creating a dichotomy between normal and abnormal appearance, behavior and ways of spending one's time. It defines what one needs to do in order to not become an outsider of the society, what one needs to do to achieve full citizenship. It can also declare what is appropriate behavior for an active citizen (see 4.2).

As pointed out earlier, there are various instances of life where people can be seen to exclude from. In my data it is often employment or education, but it is even said that youth are excluding from "normal life" (HS 24.6.2010) or "real work" (HS 25.3.2012; HS Opinions 29.8.2012), for instance. Expressions like *real work* ("oikeat työt") refer to a normative sphere of work, inside of which there are right and wrong jobs.

Normality can only be understood as an opposite to abnormality. The one is nothing without the other. This is also visible in my data, where abnormality and normality go hand in hand. Nikolas Rose (1999) has described the idea of normality as being shaped through what at different times is taken as natural and on the other hand as condemnable. Through this understanding of normality a set of unspoken instructions is created, through which it is possible to make interventions to those identified as abnormal.

What kinds of meanings are given to normal life in my data? Completely normal life includes a home, a family, work and hobbies (HS Opinions 4.9.2012). A normal person does not have neurological diseases (HS Opinions 21.9.2012) and is not disabled or “deviant” (HS Editorials 28.3.2012). A normal family is “an academically educated one” (HS Opinions 21.9.2012). A completely normal girl is one that does not use make-up, date, smoke cigarettes or consume energy drinks:

I will tell you an example: ‘The bad girl’ uses make-up, dates, smokes cigarettes and consumes energy drinks. ‘The good girl’ doesn’t do any of them. She is completely normal. The bad girl does not like the good girl, but after a couple of days the good girl uses make-up, dates and smokes cigarettes. After this the good and the bad girl are best friends. (HS Opinions 5.11.2012.)<sup>38</sup>

Here normality can be turned into abnormality and good can be turned into bad. Furthermore exclusion could be turned into inclusion and the other way around. This strengthens the idea of these kinds of phenomena as constantly changing and unstable.

A normal life includes following certain sets of codes, regulations and values, which can deal with proper behavior for instance. In the next paragraph from an opinion piece by pseudonym “On every branch a drop-out” (“Joka oksalla pudokas”) drugs and graffitis represent forms of stepping outside these norms:

From own experience I know that a young can try and find relief to their life’s meaninglessness by stepping out-

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<sup>38</sup> ”Kerron esimerkin: ’Paha tyttö’ käyttää meikkiä, seurustelee, polttaa ja juo energiajuomia. ’Kiltti tyttö’ ei tee mitään näistä. On ihan normaali. Paha tyttö ei pidä kiltistä tytöstä, mutta parin päivän päästä kiltti tyttö käyttää meikkiä, seurustelee ja polttaa tupakkaa. Tämän jälkeen kiltti ja paha tyttö ovat parhaita kavereita.”

side the regulations and rules of behavior. This can include drugs. Someone makes themselves visible with graffiti. (HS Opinions 10.6.2011.)<sup>39</sup>

What then is normal and abnormal free time? In my data abnormality is oftentimes attached to the virtual world, which seems to be more or less detached from the *normal* world:

The virtual reality creates a possibility to detach and become excluded from the society. It is almost impossible to control the contents of Internet and therefore it is easy for the person living in unreality to find counterparts and support for their twisted insights. It may be difficult to notice this kind of exclusion. The person may look and behave all normally. At the same time they may become estranged from people and everyday reality. (HS Opinions 14.8.2012.)<sup>40</sup>

This paragraph describes people who become excluded to the virtual world as looking normal and behaving completely normally. Whilst at the same time it gives meaning to the ones excluded from the social world as traditionally having somehow abnormal behavior and appearance.

The virtual world can also be understood in opposition to normal ways of spending one's time, such as reading or being out-of-doors (HS Opinions 17.12.2012). There are other norms too for good and bad ways of spending one's free time. Good free time

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<sup>39</sup> ”Omasta kokemuksestani tiedän, että nuori voi hakea helpotusta elämänsä merkityksettömyyteen yhteiskunnan sääntöjen ja käyttäytymiskoodien ulkopuolelta, myös huumeista. Joku tekee itsensä näkyväksi graffiteilla.”

<sup>40</sup> ”Virtuaalitodellisuus luo mahdollisuuden olla irrallaan ja syrjäytyä yhteiskunnasta. Koska verkkojen sisältöä on lähes mahdoton valvoa, syntyy tilanne, jossa epätodellisuudessa elävä ihminen löytää helposti vastinetta ja tukea omille vääristyneille käsityksilleen. Tätä syrjäytyneisyyttä voi olla vaikea havaita. Ihminen voi ulkoisesti näyttää ja käyttäytyä normaalisti. Samalla hän saattaa kuitenkin vieraantua ihmisistä ja arkitodellisuudesta.”

includes hobbies whereas bad free time consists of “hanging out at the mall” (HS Opinions 24.1.2010).

At times, exclusion is even defined as a disease-like phenomenon: “A new medicine for youth unemployment needs to be found” (HS Opinions 25.3.2012)<sup>41</sup>. Youth unemployment is here defined as something unhealthy, abnormal that needs to be cured and eliminated, like a disease.

Abnormality can be understood through a metaphor of “getting lost on the sidetracks, outside our society” (HS Opinions 12.10.2009). Here, abnormality is a mistake, an unintentional sidetrack, from where the goal is to get back on track with a compass in hand. Furthermore an opinion piece by Jasmine Plavsic (HS Opinions 21.10.2008) on youth centers explains that “a normal teenager can be one who is not a problem teenager” – pure and simple. A problem teenager on the other hand is one who smokes, can even be addicted to drugs and is attending a special-education class. Many of the problem teenagers have not experienced a normal everyday life at homes. This opinion piece demands that “the youth centers’ activities should be built on the conditions of normal teenagers and the problem teenagers need to adapt to this.” (ibid.)<sup>42</sup>

The discourse of normativity is a highly moralistic one – defining the lives of some young people as normal and the lives of

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<sup>41</sup> ”Nuorisotyöttömyyteen etsittävä uusia lääkkeitä.”

<sup>42</sup> ”Siksi on mielestäni ensisijaisen tärkeää, että nuorisotalojen toiminta rakennetaan tavallisen nuoren ehdoilla ja ongelmanuorta autetaan sopeutumaan siihen.”

others as abnormal implicitly (or explicitly) includes the moralistic insight of better and worse plus the will to intervene in order to turn the abnormal into normal.

In the context of exclusion it may be fruitful to understand several different kinds of normalities. The conventional normality can show itself in a very different light to the young themselves and in fact be understood as abnormal. (Virokannas 2002, 141.) The understanding of normal in my data however is very one-dimensional. It emphasizes employment, and not any kind of employment but “real work”. It emphasizes the proper kind of activities in one’s free time and behaving in a certain way, which does not include for example smoking cigarettes, hanging out at the mall or getting lost in the virtual world.

The discourse of normativity reasserts my hypothesis that exclusion as a paradoxical concept is in fact a lot about defining what normal is (see 1.6):

Exclusion has a lot to do with normality and normativity. Saying that one is excluded, includes the idea that they should be something else (that is included) and how to achieve this inclusion (to become normal citizens). Pathologization of the excluded is also preliminary control of the society – it tells the citizens what one needs to be in order to remain in the centre of the society and the nation state. (Helne 2004, 40–41, translation IH.)

The discourse of normativity emphasizes that which is perceived as normal and moral behavior aiming discursively at setting the abnormal ones back on track. It demands *normal* behavior from the young in order to receive full citizenship.

#### 4.4 The gender essentialist discourse

There has been a growing concern especially on the exclusion of young boys. Gender plays an important role in the debate on youth's exclusion but how is gender understood in the debate?

Pirjoliisa Laurén, “an A+ girl in her time, mother of boys” (HS Opinions 6.5.2010) writes about her concern on the “not-A+ boys”, who are in the danger of becoming excluded. In her opinion piece exclusion is a phenomenon only attached to boyhood. Her signature “an A+ girl, mother of boys” is especially interesting. By signing her article this way, she creates a dichotomy between A+ girls and not-A+ boys. She writes: “Who would help these not-A+ boys that realize in the end of preliminary school or high school that ‘should start to study’, but then it’s too late?” (ibid.). Here she is putting emphasis on the boys’ own inability to study on time.

Petteri Järvinen (HS Opinions 29.5.2012) asks in his opinion piece, where the young men are hiding.

A summer night in the city and we can observe that young women are more beautiful, taller and smarter than ever before. They are filling cafés, free time activities, sport halls and universities. But where are the young men of same age? You cannot see them on the streets. Probably many of them are on their home sofas or have gone to have a beer. Way too many are at home in front of the computer playing, coding or just hanging around in the Internet. (HS Opinions 29.5.2012.)<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> ”Kesäinen ilta kaupungilla, ja havainto on selvä: nuoret naiset ovat kauniimpia, pidempiä ja fiksumpia kuin koskaan ennen. He täyttävät kahvilat, harrastuspaikat, liikuntahallit ja yliopistot. Mutta missä ovat vastaavanikäiset nuoret miehet? Heitä ei kaduilla näy. Moni on todennäköisesti jäänyt kotisohvalle tai mennyt kaljalle. Ja aivan liian moni on kotona tietokoneen ääressä pelaamassa, koodaamassa tai muuten vain netissä roikkumassa.”



Here we can see that men and women have essentially differing ways of spending time. Women are out and about, active young citizens, whereas men are passive and either at home or in pubs. Different ways of spending time receive opposing meanings and are defined as either superior or inferior:

**Table 3. Dichotomies in the gender essentialist discourse.**

<b>GOOD</b>	<b>BAD</b>
café	pub
on the streets	at home
doing sports	using the com-puter
girl	boy
studying conscientiously	not studying

Boys are defined as angry, badly behaving and violent. Boys' exclusion is manifested in "[b]reaking up places and over-the-top aggressivity" (HS Opinions 27.9.2010). Especially video games, the computer and spending time with it until late at night are seen as increasingly troubling traits of young men.

The A+ girls have gotten their grades with hard work. Why aren't boys as willing to work? Or better yet, why are boys lazy? [-] We still think that boys will be boys, even though this unfortunately means that it is socially more acceptable for a boy to be a lazy, slightly aggres-

sive, badly concentrating dork than hard-working, determined, conscientious and sophisticated. (HS Opinions 7.5.2010.)<sup>44</sup>

In the previous paragraph, Laura Norrman describes boys as lazy dorks, compared to the hard-working, determined A+ girls. She refers to both the society's role in creating gender (socially acceptable) and the boys themselves being lazy (Why are boys lazy?). She wants "the fussing around boys to end" (HS Opinions 7.5.2010)<sup>45</sup>, therefore calling for boys' individual responsibility over their success in school.

Tommi Snellman is concerned about the inequalizing effect of the schooling system on boys and girls. The discourse of gender essentialism is attached to the men's equality movement. As opposed to feminism, I shall call it *masculinism*. Masculinism is concerned about the overly feminist agenda in mainstream politics and seeks to point out the strands in society where in fact men are worse off than women. At its extreme end masculinism argues that in fact there is no such thing as inequality of women, but men are the ones that are in an unequal position in the society – especially when it comes to exclusion, criminality, unemployment, alcoholism, suicides and university students for example.

Tommi Snellman takes part in in the discourse by pointing out that the schooling system is suffocating manly traits and favoring women. "In this feminist time I want to call for increased conversation on *real* problems in equality, also from the point of

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<sup>44</sup> "Kympin tytöistä sanotaan, että he ovat saaneet arvosanansa ahkeruudella, siis tekemällä töitä. Miksi pojat eivät siis ole yhtä lailla halukkaita tekemään töitä? Tai oikeammin, miksi pojat ovat laiskoja? [-] Ajattelemme edelleen, että pojat ovat poikia, vaikka se valitettavasti tarkoittaa sitä, että pojan on sosiaalisesti hyväksyttävä olla laiska, hieman aggressiivinen, huonosti keskittyvä moukka kuin ahkera, määrätietoinen, tunnollinen ja sivistynyt."

<sup>45</sup> "Milloin tämä poikien hyysääminen loppuu?"

view of men instead of a simple cherry-picking argumentation” (HS Opinions 17.5.2010, emphasis IH) <sup>46</sup>.

Arhi Kuittinen takes a stance on gender-neutral education. He sees it as an inabiding idea, since “boys and girls absolutely need different kind of teaching. Boys need action-, problem-, story- and role-based and multifaceted competing teaching. Taught by men. [-] Girls get satisfaction from quietly submitting to a motherly female teacher.”<sup>47</sup> This opinion piece takes me to the heart of this discourse of gender essentialism. Typical of this discourse is:

- 1) Understanding of boys’ and girls’ habits and especially ways of learning as essentially, naturally and unchangingly different.
- 2) Understanding the girls’ way of learning and being as favored by the education system and the society.
- 3) Understanding the girls’ way of learning and being as somewhat inferior to that of boys’.

There can also be found an opposing view to this essentialist discourse. According to its opposite, it is understood that there are personal traits that do not fit into the traditional dichotomous gender-binary. Therefore the society should take into account the personal differences, not the traits traditionally understood as gender-specific. (HS Opinions 8.10.2009.)

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<sup>46</sup> ”peräänkuuluttaisin tänä feministisenä aikana lisää keskustelua tosiasiallisista ongelmista tasa-arvossa myös miesten näkökulmasta suppean rusinat pullasta -argumentoinnin sijaan.”

<sup>47</sup> ”pojat ja tytöt tarvitsisivat ehdottomasti erilaista opetusta. Pojat kaipaavat toiminta-, ongelma-, tarina- ja roolikeskeistä sekä monitahoisesti kisailevaa opetusta. Miesten ohjaamana. [-] Tytöt tuntevat tyydytystä alistuessaan hiljaa äitimäisen naisopettajan ohjaksiin.”

All in all in my data gender is understood as an essential manner with certain traits, qualities, ways of learning and ways of spending time typical of one's gender. Boys are understood to behave aggressively, to be victims of an unequal schooling system favoring feminine ways of learning. Girls on the other hand are seen as hard-working and conscientious. But according to this discourse girls don't really seem to be ambitious and intelligent, they are just taking advantage of the system which is designed for girly needs. Girls' way of learning and being is oftentimes seen as somehow inferior to boys'. They are defined as "female nerds with no opinions" (HS Opinions 6.10.2009). This is construction of two opposing, naturally differing genders. Furthermore, exclusion is defined as a boys' problem and boys' risk.

## **5 DISCOURSES OF THE MORAL PANIC**

### **5.1 The neoliberal discourse**

Neoliberalism has its roots in Mont Peler Society, which was founded in 1947. The neoliberal theory was very marginal up until the 1970s when it started to gain more power quite rapidly. By the end of the 1970s neoliberalism can be said to have become the major economic theory in USA and Great Britain with the help of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher (Harvey 2008.) Neoliberalism has also come to the area of social and public policy.

A significant amount of the opinion pieces in my data refer to the economic aspect of exclusion. Quite often the costs are made

visible attached to the awareness of human consequences. A fairly common rhetoric frame in my data is to refer to the costs of youth's exclusion as "if not – then". Youth's exclusion needs to be solved – if not for the individual, human consequences, then for the economic costs and because youth's exclusion becomes very expensive to the society. I think that the huge amount of discussion on costs of youth's exclusion tells a lot about our time, where money is the strongest argument, even if the issue was something as human as exclusion.

In addition, neoliberalism has brought the cost-efficiency, effectiveness and productivity to the regime of social services. Different solutions to the danger of exclusion are evaluated according to their ability to diminish public spending. Staff writer Marjut Lindberg (HS Editorials 18.3.2012) points out that a bee needs to be set up to help the young: "The most cost-efficient and productive way to perform this bee is to get the young to education"<sup>48</sup>. Evaluating cost-efficiency and productivity create youth's exclusion as an economic danger. Furthermore, the responsibility of the bee's success is basically set on the youth's shoulders by attending and finishing their education.

Behind the neoliberal discourse I consider to be the awareness of the growing amount of elderly in the population, the economic recession and therefore the challenges in economic sustainability. Taking this into consideration youth's exclusion begins to show itself as an economic issue and a threat to Finnish competitive strength in the global economic world.

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<sup>48</sup> ”Nuorten saaminen koulutukseen on talkootyön muodoista tehokkainta ja tuottavinta.”

Staff writer Jouni Välijärvi (HS Editorials 31.10.2011) attaches youth's employment and other activities in the society to the population getting older and the international competition getting harder: "As the population is getting older and the international competition getting harder, it becomes even more important that each and every young is actively participating in the labour market and the rest of the society"<sup>49</sup>.

Social Democratic Party's Minister Lauri Ihalainen (HS Editorials 3.3.2012) is worried about the mathematics of employment in Finland – every year there are 10 000 less young people entering the labour market than those retiring. Therefore "youth is a dwindling resource that should not be let to exclude" (ibid.). Here, youth is defined as a resource, like wood or bananas, essential to the economy of the nation state. Also, *let to exclude* defines youth as passive objects of governmental actions (see 4.2.3).

Individual freedom, flexibility and the ability to choose are some of the keywords in the neoliberal discourse. The classless high school is described within this discourse in Julia Salonen's opinion pieces:

[The classless high school] gives every young the opportunity to decide on their own studying rhythm and subjects creating a flexible, optional and free entity. [-] Why should a high school student be tied tightly to a class and this way reduce their freedom and their ability to make individual choices and decisions? It is also important to notice that a high school student is responsible for their

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<sup>49</sup> "Väestön ikääntyessä ja kansainvälisen kilpailun kovetessa jokaisen nuoren aktiivinen mukanaolo työelämässä ja muussa yhteiskunnan toiminnassa tulee entistä tärkeämmäksi."

own studies, decisions and results, no matter what the high school system is. (HS Opinions 3.3.2008.)<sup>50</sup>

Here the classless high school is given meaning to in neoliberal terms – flexibility, individual freedom and the freedom of decision. It also refers to an important facet, the individual responsibility.

In my data, wage-labour receives meaning as the primary way to inclusion: “Work is the best way to include the young to the society” (HS Opinions 25.3.2012)<sup>51</sup>. The secondary way is education, which is or at least should be aiming at whole-time, permanent wage-labour. When exclusion is understood to happen primarily or exclusively from wage-labour, it includes the idea of people having to work – and why? Because of economic competitiveness. This is also linked to the fourth paradox represented in the introduction – the difference between individual experiences and societal categorizations (see 1.6). There is no denying the important features of work. Work is significant in defying individual life style, identity and social status and in providing income (Pohjola 1994, 114). Work is especially important for the young as a sign of becoming independent from their childhood homes. But can these elements be achieved in some other way than attending wage-labour?

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<sup>50</sup> [Luokaton lukio] antaa jokaiselle nuorelle mahdollisuuden päättää omasta opiskelurytmistään ja oppiaineistaan luoden joustavan, valinnaisen ja vapaan kokonaisuuden. [-] Miksi lukiolainen pitäisi sitoa tiukasti luokkaan ja sen kautta rajoittaa hänen vapauttaan ja mahdollisuuttaan tehdä omia valintoja ja päätöksiä? On myös tärkeä huomioida, että lukiolainen on lukiojärjestelmästä riippumatta itse vastuussa opinnoistaan, valinnoistaan sekä oppimistuloksistaan”

<sup>51</sup> ”Paras tapa kiinnittää nuori yhteiskuntaan on työ”

There are very few examples in my data, where the alternative ways of arranging one's life are made visible without a moralistic tone and a demand to normativity: "Everyone who wants to work should be able to go to work. The ones who want out of work could be freed from paid work by current regulations or by assuring everyone with basic income." (HS Editorials 24.1.2010.)<sup>52</sup> In this paragraph a hierarchy is not created between these two options. They are made into equal opportunities and life choices with no moralistic tone.

In the neoliberal theory it has become important to specify, who is responsible and what their exact responsibilities are. In general the responsible instances are called for, named and demanded responsibility from frequently in my data. Responsibility is especially demanded from five instances: the young themselves, their parents and other adults, the welfare state, the politicians and the corporate world.

Firstly, responsibility is demanded from adults – especially in the context of the debate on "Ihan tavallisia asioita" -campaign. Opinion pieces call for caring for their young from the adults. Tiia Vastamäki, a ninth-grader (HS Opinions 12.11.2012) demands responsibility from the parents:

Parents should care at least a bit, if their children use drugs or get involved if the school repeatedly informs about the kids' disturbing behavior. [-] I wish that the parents would take more part in their children's lives. [-]

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<sup>52</sup> "Töihin olisi saatava kaikki halukkaat. Työstä pois haluavat taas voidaan vapauttaa palkkatyöstä joko nykyisten säädösten puitteissa tai takaamalla kaikille työvoimaan kuuluville kansalaispalkka."



Adults, you are the ones teaching us. We take example from you and act on that basis.<sup>53</sup>

Here, it is the parents, who should take responsibility over their children's use of drugs, bad behavior at school and setting a proper example for the children.

Secondly, it is the young themselves that are demanded responsibility from, like in the next paragraph: "My 21-year-old son has systematically aimed at avoiding schools and work, too, ever since his teenage years. His first years of laziness were easy to hide under teenage rebellion, but for the mother it was not easy." (HS Opinions 10.2.2012a)<sup>54</sup>. Here, it is the 21-year-old son, that is the subject of action, but also responsible for his "laziness" and for "systematically avoiding schools and work".

Thirdly, it is the welfare state and politicians seen as responsible for this troubling phenomenon:

Children need a strong state and a society that supports those who need help. Without accusations, shame or guardianship. [-] in Finland the welfare state needs to take responsibility over the import of services, their comprehensiveness and adequacy. (HS Opinions 20.9.2012.)<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> "Vanhempien pitäisi välittää edes jonkin verran, jos heidän omat lapsensa käyttävät päihteitä, tai puuttua asiaan, jos koulusta ilmoitetaan toistuvasti lapsen häiritsevistä käyttäytymisistä. [-] Toivon, että vanhemmat ottaisivat enemmän osaa lapsensa elämään. [-] Aikuiset, tehän meitä opettatte. Otamme teistä mallia ja toimimme sen mukaan."

<sup>54</sup> "Minun 21-vuotias poikani on pyrkinyt systemaattisesti teini-iästään lähtien kaihittamaan niin kouluja kuin työelämääkin. Ensimmäiset 'lulumuodot' pojan oli helppo häivyttää teinikapinan taakse, mutta äidille se ei ollut helppoa."

<sup>55</sup> "Lapset tarvitsevat vahvan valtion ja yhteiskunnan, joka tukee niitä, jotka tarvitsevat tukea ilman syyllistämistä, häpeää ja holhoamista. [-] Suomessa hyvinvointivaltion on kannettava vastuunsa kansalaisille tuotavista palveluista, niiden kattavuudesta ja riittävyydestä."

Politicians are demanded responsibility for the exclusion. “According to the past few years it seems like the Finnish society’s political and economic establishment is in the danger of becoming excluded.” (HS Pääkirjoitus 19.9.2012). Fifthly, enterprises are called for increased responsibility. This happens especially in the debate over youth’s unemployment.

The neoliberal discourse sees the young as pieces of an economic puzzle trying to gain maximum cost-efficiency, productivity and economic competitiveness on the global economic market. Youth’s exclusion is understood as an economic threat and responsibilities from especially five instances are specified in combating this threat. But also, the economic discourse is walking hand-in-hand with the individually troublesome consequences of exclusion (the if not – then -argumentation). Therefore I interpret a part of the discourse to be attached with the writers’ knowledge of the valuable nature of economic argumentation in today’s political world.

## **5.2 The communitarian discourse – longing for the good old times**

Riitta Jallinoja (2006) theorized the growing familialism in Finnish public debate in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The troubling nature of parental inability to raise their children or the concern on families’ deterioration don’t play a primary role in my data. Still some traces of the familialistic discourse can be found – it is somewhat flailing in the background of the debate. The familialistic discourse emphasizes the changing nature of work with longer work days and greater pressure as a reason for families’

deterioration. These lead to less time spent with children and family, which again leads to inadequate parenting and insufficient everyday life for the young. This can be understood as a reason for the youth becoming excluded. Väestöliitto's chairperson Hiila Helena (HS Opinions 26.9.2008) calls for rethinking societal core values and their order. She is worried about the insufficient time parents spend with their children. What does this rethinking core values mean and what are these core values?

Then again, I could argue that familialism has turned into communitarism – the growing societal concern of communities and laying more and more responsibility on them. Communities according to my data can be anything from recreational communities, the army and youth centers to the church or virtual communities. Family can be understood as one of these communities, but not the only or the primary one of concern. I call this the communitarian discourse.

Hand in hand with the neoliberal and communitarian triumph neo-conservatism has gained importance. Neo-conservatism calls for morality and strong family values. Hiila Helena (HS Opinions 26.9.2008) continues pointing out that relatives and friends don't help each other anymore, which puts families into troublesome positions. The communitarian discourse is in my interpretation deeply attached to neo-conservatism. It is concerned about the changing nature of society in general and longing for the good old times. These good old times consisted of strong nuclear families with relatives and neighborhoods helping each other. Mothers were at home spending time with their children and the Internet did not seduce people to its dangerous networks. Now the advertisement of alcoholic beverages is freer and pornography is visible on television and in the streets (HS Opinions

13.9.2012). This discourse is also critical towards materialism (HS Opinions 10.1.2008). This is what rethinking societal core values means in the context of this discourse.

The communitarian discourse is linked to an almost mythical understanding of communities taking care of each other. In addition to that this mythical state of community existed in the past, it also exists *elsewhere* – that is in other cultures:

In our culture a socially withdrawing person is left alone, because we want to be considerate. Consideration is over-valued in the Finnish culture. In the rest of the world families and relatives live so close to each other and are so attached that no one is left to become excluded.” (HS Opinions 27.9.2008.)<sup>56</sup>

Here, communities that are closely attached to each other receive a highly mythical power that could resolve exclusion and the Finnish culture as well.

Communitarism is linked to a traditional understanding of a nuclear family. “When the mother is doing fine, the whole family is doing fine” (HS Opinions 8.5.2011). This statement creates an understanding of the mother as the primary caregiver of the family and the one to stay at home with small children. In addition it is attached to the discourse of gender essentialism:

Because of lack of family time, are young men maybe lacking a proper father model, which would provide security, boundaries and a good self-esteem? Do young men spoil their brain capacity with drugs and alcohol already when growing up? [-] women have to take care of giving

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<sup>56</sup> ”Syrjään vetäytyvä ihminen meidän kulttuurissamme jätetään yksin, koska halutaan olla hienotunteisia. Suomalaisessa kulttuurissa hienotunteisuus on yliarvostettua. Muualla maailmassa perheet ja suvut elävät niin lähekkäin ja sidoksissa toisiinsa, ettei kukaan pääse syrjäytymään.”

birth to new citizens and the years securing their offspring's proper development. (HS Opinions 3.5.2010.)<sup>57</sup>

This paragraph enforces a traditional understanding of man's and woman's place in the family and in the society.

President Sauli Niinistö's campaign "Ihan tavallisia asioita" can be attached to the communitarian discourse. It moves the responsibility of solving social problems from the state and the welfare state to communities, families, the third sector and individuals themselves. The campaign emphasizes communities' and parents' role in salvaging the young from exclusion. There is also a familialistic discourse underneath the surface. It is a tone that says that parents aren't capable of taking care of their children anymore and the whole community needs to step up, take care of the children and so we may prevent exclusion.

The campaign accelerated a vivid debate and two poles can be found in my data – the other one is critical of the campaign with its New Right -tone and naïve commands for mainly well-off, middle- or high-class families. This pole is attached to the structural explanation of social problems. The other pole emphasizes the fact that children need adults that are there for them – all that is needed are simple everyday things. This is the individualistic explanation of social problems. I think that both poles have a point, but that these simple, everyday things are in no means adequate to prevent the exclusion of youth. As Tuukka Tammi

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<sup>57</sup> ”Puuttuuko ehkä nuorilta miehiltä perheen yhteisen ajan vähyydestä johtuva kunnollinen isän malli turvallisuuden, rajojen ja hyvän itsetunnon kasvattajana? Pilaavatko nuoret miehet jo kasvuaikana aivokapasiteettiaan liian varhain aloitetuilla alkoholien ja huumeiden käytöllä? [-] naiset joutuvat huolehtimaan uusien kansalaisten synnyttämisestä ja jälkipolvien tärkeistä kasvatusturvavuosista.”

(2012, 598) says, especially not when we are talking about the NEET-youth.

### **5.3 The discourse of defending Finnish nation state – the spirit of the Winter War**

In the public debate the young are given meaning to as “the hopes of the future”, “the future of the nation state” and “the hopes of Finland”. They are also referred to as “the tax payers of the future”, which connects the young to the neoliberal discourse and the economic competitiveness of Finland. Furthermore the young are even given responsibility over the Finnish welfare state: “The young that are on the sidetracks of education and wage-labour are undermining the foundations of welfare society” (HS Opinions 9.4.2011)<sup>58</sup>. Or even: “The future of Finland lies on the young. [-] A successful Finland needs the young to work and fast.” (HS Opinions 9.8.2012.)<sup>59</sup>

The discourse of defending Finnish nation state is attached to the neoliberal discourse, often implicitly. Referring to “the future of the nation state” oftentimes means securing the Finnish economic competitiveness. According to this discourse exclusion as a social problem is an economic issue rather than an individually troublesome issue.

In the Winter War the Finnish spine remained strong and no one left their buddy. Now our fatherland is threatened by whole different dangers than during the years of war.

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<sup>58</sup> ”Opiskelusta ja työelämästä sivuun joutuneet nuoret murentavat hyvinvointiyhteiskunnan perustan.”

<sup>59</sup> ”Suomen tulevaisuus on nuorten varassa. [-] Menestyvä Suomi tarvitsee nuoret töihin ja nopeasti.”

[–] I challenge every Finn to answer today’s challenges: we should no longer leave a buddy. Not because of their money, hobbies, religion or looks, and especially not because of one’s own rush. Let’s secure together and with joint responsibility the school path and future for our children. (HS Opinions 2.10.2008.)<sup>60</sup>

In this paragraph the nation state receives an extremely strong value. The Winter War is a somewhat mythical historical event for the Finnish nation and reference to the Winter War means referring to the Finnish gut, bravery, not giving up and pulling together. According to this opinion piece *we* need to gather up *together* in the spirit of the Winter War and fight for the Finnish nation state. This time the *danger* is exclusion.

Tatu Tuomela, Ulla Hyvönen and Elina Havu want to combat the vivid stereotype of the lazy generation Z that does not really even want to work:

We are worried about how the youth and the questions about their work are discussed in public. [–] Every year we meet thousands of youth willing to work and pay their taxes so that the Finnish welfare society would work.” (HS Opinions 17.3.2012.)<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> ”Talvisodassa suomalaisten selkäranka pysyi vahvana, kun kaveria ei jätetty. Nyt isänmaatamme uhkaavat aivan toisenlaiset vaarat kuin sotavuosina. [–] Haastan jokaisen suomalaisen vastaamaan tämän ajan haasteisiin: kaveria ei jätetä. Ei vaurauden, ei harrastusten, ei uskonnon eikä ulkonäön takia, eikä varsinkaan omiin kiireisiin vedoten. Turvataan yhdessä ja yhteisvastuullisesti lastemme koulutie ja tulevaisuus.”

<sup>61</sup> Olemme huolissamme siitä, millä tavalla nuorista ja heihin liittyvistä työelämäkysymyksistä keskustellaan julkisuudessa. Emme tunnista median luomaa kuvaa nuorista tai yleistystä nuorten haluttomuudesta sitoutua työelämään ja ottaa vastuuta palkkatyön tekemisestä. Tapaamme vuosittain tuhansia nuoria, jotka ovat valmiita työskentelemään ja maksamaan veroja, jotta suomalainen hyvinvointiyhteiskunta toimisi.

However the writers end up somewhat re-enforcing the stereotype. The opinion piece reinforces youth's responsibility over the Finnish welfare society.

Teacher Mikko Hakala argues that education should be more attached to work life. According to him this would "support the 'weaker' students but also the top students that are of special use for the future Finland" (HS Opinions 25.7.2010)<sup>62</sup>. This creates a dichotomy between weaker students (somewhat useful) and top students (especially useful for the future Finland). Paradoxically the opinion piece is about resolving youth's exclusion.

Youth's exclusion is a threat to the illusion of a uniform, homogeneous nation state and the Finnish nation. My data strongly enforces the myth of a nation state, the *we*, the Finnish people. An important ingredient in this discourse is securing the economic competitiveness of Finland. Therefore exclusion is not an unwanted phenomenon because of its individual effects for the young person, but for it being an economic setback. Youth are given meaning to as a restless, badly behaving, irresponsible group of citizens threatening the future of the nation state and the welfare state. Furthermore, a bee needs to be set up in order to secure the nation state and the welfare state.

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<sup>62</sup> "Tässä tuettaisiin 'heikompien' oppilaiden ohella myös niitä huippuja, joita tulevaisuuden Suomi tarvitsee erityisesti."



## 6 CONCLUSION

Discourse analytic research is always about making decisions – which verbal processes are analyzed and represented in the research, which aren't (Jokinen et al. 1999, 66). Therefore acknowledging the role of the researcher is essential. Discourse analytic research is one text amongst other texts. It is creating meanings and constructing the very phenomena it is researching. (ibid., 85.) Jokinen et al. (1999, 203-226) have defined four subject positions for the researcher. The *analyst* is aiming at minimizing the researcher's role in the analyzing process. *The attorney's* research aims at assisting some destination or someone's cause. *The interpreter* sees the data as offering multiple different variations of interpretations. In the center of the research is the communicational relationship of data and the researcher. The fourth one is *the debater*, who is an active part-taker in the very data. It is therefore not a valid subject position in my research. I see myself as an interpretative researcher. The discourses I have presented here are just ones of the many possible choices. They are however descriptive and informative ones of the current debate in Finnish media.

The researcher makes decisions effecting the analysis and the results already when planning the research process, gathering data, choosing methodological tools and posing research questions. It is noteworthy that my data is collected from only one newspaper in Finland. As a national newspaper it may be the best one to choose, to shed light to the public debate in whole Finland, but for further research purposes it would be interesting to gather comparative data from some local newspapers as well. I chose not to include news articles in my data, which I see as answering

different kinds of research questions than the ones I went out to answer.

However, my data succeeded in answering the research questions I collected it for. It is quite vast both temporally and numerically therefore providing multidimensional insight into the public debate. I conducted my research in the very middle of the intense debate on youth's exclusion. Therefore I think that after the next few years it is possible to see where the debate leads to, does the moral panic become tamed and what is the next boom in the debate on exclusion. Continuing the time-frame of the data collection is another interesting question for further research purposes.

Wage-labour has been called "the best medicine for exclusion" (Raunio 2006, 83). German sociologist Ulrich Beck (2000, 164) calls this primary position of wage-labour in inclusion "the monopoly of inclusion". Wage-labour can thus be seen as the primary way for an individual to achieve full citizenship and to combat exclusion. The roots of the monopoly of inclusion are found in French philosophy (Raunio 2006, 73). It can even be stated that we are moving from welfare to workfare, which means that work has become the primary provider of welfare instead of the welfare state. An important functioning mechanism of workfare is active labour market policy. (Juhila 2006, 57.) I argue, that in the public debate on youth's exclusion, wage-labour receives the monopoly of inclusion and youth's exclusion becomes discursively very much synonymous to unemployment.

However, youth's position at the labour market is not as simple as the public debate assumes. Raija Julkunen (2008) has theorized *new work*. Typical of it is so called untypical employment,

which consists of part-time and fixed-term contracts. After the recession of the beginning of the 1990s in Finland the amount of untypical work has not increased in particular, but youth are a group that is affected by it probably the most. Youth's situation in the employment market has even been called "the waiting room of employment" (Holvas & Vähämäki 2005).

Instead of the monopoly of inclusion wage-labour has received, Ulrich Beck (2000) has provided insights on rethinking work. The monopoly is most certainly a historically produced and an unnatural, unstable, socially constructed and contingent phenomenon. Beck (*ibid.*) points out that we must find a new center for inclusion and he suggests the basic income guarantee. Basic income guarantee is a single universal social security benefit provided to everyone with no means-testing or contribution conditions (Dean & Taylor-Gooby 1992, 160–161). I agree that we must rethink work and the monopoly it has received. I find the most important question to be, if there is room in the public debate for other forms of activity providing full membership in the community, apart from wage-labour.

In chapter 1.6 I argued that exclusion needs to be understood as a paradox for five main reasons. I am now returning to these paradoxicalities in order to find out how youth's exclusion is understood in the Finnish public media debate. First of all, is exclusion an individual or a structural question in the public media debate? The repetitive neoliberal discourse refers to youth being responsible for the Finnish nation state, its economy and the future of the welfare state. The public debate demands fighting against social dependency therefore promoting autonomy and individual responsibility. Active citizenship becomes primarily attached to wage-labour. However, there is also the silent counter-discourse,

which emphasizes the structural factors behind unemployment demanding political reforms and responsibility from the public sector.

Secondly, exclusion aims at illusionary social homogeneity. Wandering youth, not conforming to the traditional life course, are seen as a threat to the homogeneity of the society. This is especially visible in the discourse of normativity. Thirdly the debate on exclusion defines a person's normative life course, normative behavior and sees them as prerequisites for full citizenship.

Fourthly, the youth's own experience of exclusion as lack of friends and becoming excluded from the social receives very little attention in the public debate. On the contrary, the exclusion from wage-labour and education receives most of the attention. What about the naturalness and relationality of exclusion in the public debate? The utmost efforts to make exclusion quantifiable, to create numbers and risk factors is a sign of aiming at naturalizing exclusion. I therefore conclude that youth's exclusion constructed by the public debate is still a paradox.

Youth's exclusion also comes out as a risk concerning the whole society. Already the numerically vast debate in the past years is an indicator of its perceived risky nature. This involves the presence of risk speech, calculation of risks and the awareness of prevailing risks (Harrikari 2008, 32). If something is constructed as risky, a moral panic may occur.

Nicholas Rose (1999, orig. 1989; 125) defined moral panic as follows: "certain phenomena come to symbolize social anxieties concerning threats to the established order and traditional values, the decline of morality and social discipline and the need to take

firm steps in order to prevent a downward spiral.” Here moral panic consists of “a phenomenon becoming a symbol for social anxieties” (ibid.). The exclusion of youth has not increased statistically during the past years, but the public debate around it has increased significantly. Therefore it can be argued that youth’s exclusion might rather be a symbol for some other social anxieties. What are these anxieties? These anxieties can concern:

1) A threat to the established order or traditional values, the decline of morality and social discipline (Rose 1999, orig. 1989; 125).

In this case the traditional values might consist of the will to work, hard work as a value, certain work ethic and the citizens’ will to work for their nation state’s economic competitiveness. Activities posing a threat to these traditional values include lazing around, hanging out at the mall, smoking pot and eating crisps on the sofa. Also the Internet may pose an unpredictable threat to the established order.

2) The need to take firm steps in order to prevent the downward spiral (ibid.).

Youth’s exclusion has received more attention than many other social phenomena or social problems during the past years. Firm steps have been taken and the public debate is demanding firmer steps to be taken. It can be said that there is considered to be a downward spiral that needs to be put a stop to. The firm steps are simplified to the easiest possible solutions in the public debate.

Taking these points into account, I am arguing, that a moral panic has indeed aroused around youth’s exclusion, sparking in the early years of 21<sup>st</sup> century and flaring up somewhere around year 2008. This becomes clear especially since youth’s exclusion has

not quantifiably gone up significantly, whereas at the same time the debate has sparked. The public debate therefore comes out as a moral panic that is pointing out places for responsibility, describing normality and demanding moral behaviour from young citizens. Defending the nation state's economic competitiveness becomes the whole population's responsibility and bees are demanded to be set up. I argue, that youth's exclusion in the public debate symbolically represents something else rather than being a concerning threat in itself. It represents a threat to that which used to be (the communitarian discourse), to the economic competitiveness (the neoliberal discourse) and to the nation state and the welfare state (the discourse of defending Finnish nation state).

I am also stating that there is a *third boom of exclusion*, in which exclusion is understood primarily as a problem dealing with youth. The amount of debate on exclusion of youth compared to exclusion in general has grown significantly in the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The debate on exclusion is a vivid reflection of the growth of risk politics. Youth's exclusion is understood as something threatening and risky, which needs combating against.

Youth's exclusion is a very real social problem with real material consequences. The everyday effects upon youth themselves need to be kept in mind at all times. But media has an important role in defining, constructing and giving meaning to social phenomena. In my thesis I have presented eight discourses in public debate concerning the exclusion of youth. It is not irrelevant, how exclusion is defined. In my data exclusion comes out as unemployment and laziness, as abnormality and irresponsibility and the counter-discourses are quiet and rare.

According to Ian Hacking (2009) social constructionist analysis can lead to the conclusion that we would do better without the object in question as understood today. In my point of view, the understanding of youth's exclusion should open up for more multidimensional understandings of youth as a phase of life. Does youth have the right for temporary idleness? This especially goes for the discourse of active citizenship – can't youth be active in so many other ways than through wage-labour? Activity can happen in the social world, hobbies, voluntary work and yes, even the Internet. The understanding of exclusion should open up to these multiple ways of activity. In the public debate citizenship has become conditionalized by autonomy, moral, normal and responsible behavior.

Youth is a phase of wandering, searching and finding one's path of life. The public debate fails in grasping this wandering and temporary idleness. Instead it has flamed a moral panic – could it be the time to calm down now?

## Notes

i I have worked as a social worker in child welfare services altogether for approximately six months in the metropolitan area in Finland.

ii Empowerment is a common framework especially in social work. An important feature in empowerment is to empower people so that they could help themselves and take responsibility over their own lives. Empowerment has however been criticized for shifting responsibility from the welfare institutions to the individual. Furthermore empowerment is seen to be attached to a stable and unchanging conception of power. The individual is seen as powerless, to whom the social worker can transfer power from top to bottom. (Fook 2002, 104.) On the other hand empowerment as an idea can increase individuals' participation and political activity.

iii Due to technical difficulties in the archive of newspaper Helsingin Sanomat, my data is lacking all the editorials from year 2013. This is why I have decided not to include that year in most of the comparative graphics. This is also why the amount of hits for 2013 is so small. Compared to the amounts of editorials from the previous years, I estimate that there might be about 25-35 editorials missing from my data.

iv This chapter is based on all the available data from Helsingin Sanomat, however taking into account only the editorials, columns and opinion pieces.



**Data referred to in text**

(Section, date of publication, headline, writer or pseudonym and description or post if available)

HS Opinions 3.1.2008: Millainen yhteiskunta, sellaiset nuoret (Väisänen, Jaakko; fraternity teacher).

HS Opinions 10.1.2008: Tuloerot eivät selitä ihmisten pahoinvointia (Mäkelä, Veikko; pensioner).

HS Editorials 24.1.2008: Kuntien pitää kantaa vastuu nuorista (Lindberg, Marjut).

HS Opinions 3.3.2008: Luokaton lukio on tie aikuisuuteen (Salonen, Julia).

HS Editorials 31.3.2008: Koulun pitää kannustaa liikkumaan (Lindberg, Marjut).

HS Opinions 27.3.2008: Nuorten syrjäytymistä on hyvin vaikea mitata (Myllyniemi, Sami; statistics designer, network of Youth Research).

HS Editorials 21.8.2008: Lauantaikoulu olisi paluuta 60-luvulle (Saavalainen, Heli).

HS Opinions 26.9.2008: Lasten ja nuorten hyvinvointi on kaikkien aikuisten vastuulla (Hiila, Helena; chairperson, Väestöliitto).

HS Opinions 27.9.2008: Lapsille ja nuorille saatava lisää ammatiauttajia (Päivärinta, Pinja; pupil).

HS Opinions 21.10.2008: Nuorisotalot voivat olla pelottavia paikkoja (Jasmine Plavsic).

HS Opinions 18.1.2009: Moni teini-iän parisuhde saa alkunsa netin kautta (Kareinen, Kalle; high school student).

HS Editorials 5.3.2009: Työttömyyden hoitamattomuus tulee yhteiskunnalle kalliiksi (Leinonen, Tuomas & Hassinen, Markku; Kumppaniksi ry, Valtakunnallinen työpajayhdistys).

HS Editorials 17.7.2009: Monikulttuurisuus haastaa nuorten kansalaistoiminnan (Suurpää, Leena & Honkasalo, Veronika; researchers).

HS Opinions 6.10.2009: Sukupuolineutraali koulu on ajatuksena kestävä (Kuittinen, Arhi; media educator, Theology Student).

HS Opinions 8.10.2009: Sukupuolineutraali koulu haastaa stereotyyppiset näkemykset (Laamo, Minna; Bachelor of Arts).

HS Opinions 12.10.2009: Moni eksyi harhapoluille laman myötä (Ruuskanen Kristiina; Bachelor of Social and Political Sciences).

HS Opinions 30.1.2010: Nuoret otettava mukaan päättämään työllistämisestä (Manninen, Hanna-Mari; Allianssi).

HS Opinions 24.1.2010: Myös vähävaraisten lapsilla täytyy olla mahdollisuus harrastuksiin (Myllymäki Saara, basketball coach).

HS Editorials 24.1.2010: Työtä pitää jakaa uudella tavalla (Pirttilä Ilkka; researcher).

HS Opinions 26.1.2010: Moni nuori aloittaisi mielellään työt apulaisena (Lehtovaara, Tatu).

HS Opinions 3.5.2010: Mihin nuoret innokkaat miehet oikein katoavat? (Avikainen, Veikko).

HS Opinions 6.5.2010: Miten nuoret miehet löytäisivät paikkansa yhteiskunnassa (Laurén, Pirjoliisa; an A+ girl in her time, mother of boys).

HS Opinions 7.5.2010: Milloin poikien hyysääminen loppuu? (Norrman, Laura).

HS Opinions 17.5.2010: Miesten näkökulma esiin (Snellman, Tommi; Master of Law).

HS Opinions 16.6.2010: Kaveriporukka ei useinkaan anna työn-  
teon mallia (Pihlanto, Pekka; emeritus professor).

HS Opinions 19.6.2010: Tyhjän päälle jäävien nuorten syrjäyty-  
minen pitää estää (Rajala, Ratna; Master of Arts, translator).

HS Opinions 24.6.2010: Nuoria ei saa jättää tyhjän päälle (Pseu-  
donym ”Toimintaa, ei lupauksia”, ”Action, no promises”).

HS Opinions 25.7.2010: Kouluopetus tulee linkittää lähemmäksi  
työelämää (Hakala, Mikko; teacher).

HS Opinions 27.9.2010: Poikatyö on Suomessa vielä lapsenken-  
gissä (Niinivaara, Elina; Director of gender sensitive boy work  
with immigrants).

HS Editorials 1.11.2010: Työttömyyden ydin ei katoa mihinkään  
(Akkanen, Juha).

HS Editorials 5.11.2010: Kiusaamisen rajat vain hämärtyvät.  
(Blåfield, Antti).

HS Opinions 15.1.2011: Nuorten liikuntaan tarvitaan enemmän  
iloa ja vähemmän totista kilpailuhenkeä (Aromaa, Minna;  
Asanti, Riitta; Miettinen, Pauli & Sjöholm, Kari; specialist, re-  
searchers, doctor).

HS Opinions 16.1.2011: Tukien supistaminen vain syventää nuoren syrjäytymistä (Klen, Tapio; Doctor in Psychology).

HS Opinions 9.3.2011: Löytyykö ujolle kesätöitä? (Junttila-Viinikka, Pirjo).

HS Opinions 22.3.2011: Kannustinraha aktiivisille nuorille (Pelkonen, Jaana; National Coalition Party Finland).

HS Opinions 9.4.2011: Tulevan hallituksen tulee laatia nuorisotakuu (Vuorinen, Markku; Christian Democrats).

HS Opinions 23.4.2011: Korottakaa opintotukea! (Nevaluoma, Taimi; 21 years).

HS Opinions 26.4.2011: Äidinkielen tukiovetustunteja on liian vähän (Koski, Noora; Finnish teacher).

HS Opinions 8.5.2011: Kun äiti voi hyvin, koko perhe... (Ahlström, Kristina).

HS Mielipide 10.6.2011: Syrjäytyviä nuoria tulee kaikenlaisista taustoista (pseudonym ”On every branch a drop-out”, ”Joka oksalla pudokas”).

HS Column 24.7.2011: Yhteistä hyvää pitää puolustaa (Blåfield, Antti).

HS Editorials 26.8.2011: Jokaiselle nuorelle oikeus koulutukseen (Lindberg, Marjut).

HS Editorials 29.8.2011: Koulutus ja työ ovat parasta kotouttamista (Ihalainen, Lauri; Minister of Employment).

HS Opinions 21.10.2011: Sosiaaliset ongelmat ja rapistuva ympäristö luovat turvattomuuden tunnetta asuinalueilla (Alppivuori, Kristiina; Master of Pedagogy).

HS Editorials 31.10.2011: Peruskoulu ei uudistu tuntijaon muutoksilla (Väljärvi, Jouni).

HS Opinions 6.2.2012: Oppivelvollisuusikä tulisi nostaa 18 vuoteen (Kosola, Silja; doctor).

HS Opinions 10.2.2012a: Millaisia syrjäytyneet nuoret todella ovat? (Pseudonym "Mum", "Mutsi").

HS Opinions 10.2.2012b: Nuorten äänen on kuuluttava tilastojen alta. (Myllyniemi, Sami; Suurpää, Leena & Hoikkala, Tommi; Network of Youth Research).

HS Opinions 11.2.2012: Syrjäytymisen ehkäisyssä ymmärrettävä koulun arkea (Tuomisto, Niku; director of department of education).

HS Opinions 16.2.2012: Yhteiskuntatakuu kaikkien nuorten ulottuville. (Pelkonen, Jaana; Member of Parliament, Member of City Council, Member of Social Committee, The National Coalition Party Finland).

HS Editorials 3.3.2012: Yhteiskuntatakuu vaatii kansallisia talkoita (Ihalainen, Lauri; Minister of Employment).

HS Opinions 7.3.2012: Työ on paras tapa kiinnittää nuori yhteiskuntaan (Tenhunen-Ruotsalainen, Liisa & Väisänen, Kari; Economic Information Office).

HS Opinions 15.3.2012: Kotitaloustaidot ehkäisevät syrjäytymistä (Palojoki Päivi, Rantamäki Anneli, Sarkomaa Sari, Syväniemi Anni-Mari).

HS Opinions 17.3.2012: Nuorille oikeudenmukainen työelämä (Tuomela, Tatu & Hyvönen, Tulla & Havu, Elina; SAK, STTK, Akava).

HS Editorials 18.3.2012: Nyt on aika toteuttaa nuorisotakuu (Lindberg, Marjut).

HS Opinions 25.3.2012: Nuorisotyöttömyyteen etsittävä uusia lääkkeitä (Tallberg, Andreas; chairperson StaffPoint Oy).

HS Column 28.3.2012: Vammaiset jäävät nuorisotakuusta ulos. (Lindberg Marjut).

HS Opinions 29.3.2012: Syrjäytymiseen johtavaa kasautumismiötä pitää tutkia (Vaarama; Marja & Puska, Pekka; Directors at THL).

HS Editorials 1.4.2012: Oppimisvaikeuksiin pitää puuttua varhain (Ahonen, Timo & Korkman, Maarit; professors of psychology).

HS Opinions 29.5.2012: Missä nuoret miehet lymyilevät? (Järvinen, Petteri).

HS Opinions 14.7.2012: Palvelus voi keskeytyä heppoisiin perusteisiin. (Laine, Juha T.; military doctor).

HS Opinions 9.8.2012: Koulu voi opettaa myös vastuullisuutta työelämässä (Fischer, Merja; Doctor of Technical sciences & Manner, Anu; chairperson, Zestmark).

HS Opinions 14.8.2012: Ymmärtämätön ihmismieli on aseista kaikkein vaarallisin (Mäkipää Tomi, book worker).

HS Opinions 29.8.2012: Syrjäytymässä olevat nuoret on pantava oikeisiin töihin. (Koivula Ray, entrepreneur).

HS Opinions 2.9.2012: Armeija voisi ehkäistä nuorten syrjäytymistä (Lonka, Riikka).

HS Opinions 4.9.2012: Entiset lastensuojelun asiakkaat mukaan kehittämään lastensuojelutyötä. (Böckerman Heidi, socionom student, vocational high school)

HS Opinions 6.9.2012: Nuoret töihin oppisopimuksella (Voutila, Samuli).

HS Opinions 13.9.2012: Ongelmat eivät lopu tulipaloja sammuttamalla (Hiila-o'Brien, Helena & Kurttila, Tuomas; Väestöliitto, Suomen Vanhempainliitto).

HS Editorials 19.9.2012: Päättäjien syrjäytymiseen on puututtava! (Rautio, Paavo).

HS Opinions 19.9.2012: Huono-osaisten perheissä ei ole arkea (pseudonym "Ulkopuolinen", "Outsider").

HS Opinions 20.9.2012: Kenellä on vastuu kansalaisten hyvinvoinnista? (Saloranta, Emma; development co-operation- and human rights consult, Kenya).

HS Opinions 21.9.2012: Syrjäytymisen taustalla vaikuttavat neurologiset häiriöt ovat yhä tabu. (pseudonym "Äiti", "Mom").

HS Opinions 21.10.2012: Perustulokokeilulla stoppi syrjäytymiselle. (Sihvola, Tapani; Social Democratic Party, Master of Social Sciences, CEO).

HS Opinions 5.11.2012: Epäsosiaalinen ympäristö johtaa syrjäytymiseen (Roosa Punkari, eighth-grader).

HS Opinions 12.11.2012: Aikuiset, näyttäkää mallia (Vastamäki, Tiia; ninth-grader in Nöykkiö upper secondary school).

HS Opinions 19.11.2012: En osaa enää luottaa vanhempiini (pseudonym "Toivoja", "Believer").

HS Opinions 17.12.2012: Lukemista ei pidä unohtaa, eikä hyviä kavereitakaan. (Niilo Harja, ninth-grader).

HS Opinions 1.2.2013: Toimeentuloputki jättää nuoret heitteille (Pelkonen, Jaana; Member of the Parliament, National Coalition Party Finland).

HS Opinions 8.8.2013: Suomeen kaivataan eteenpäin pyrkimistä (Korpelainen, Kasperi; law student).

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